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GRIFFITHS TAKES
POT LUCK IN
AMATIC VICTORY

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THE TIMES

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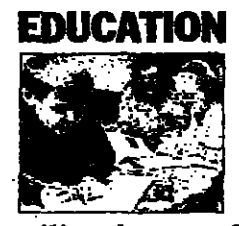
No. 65,564

FRIDAY APRIL 26 1996

MARATHON
MORE FLORA
LONDON
MARATHON
FINISHERS
PAGE 41



VALERIE GROVE
meets Martin
Mears, man of
maverick legal
opinions
PAGE 19



EDUCATION
Families that opt for
teaching at home, PAGE 39



CRANBERRY PIOUS
The Irish stadium
band drown
David Sinclair
in sticky
sentiment
PAGE 37



THE GIRL IN GOAL
Rachel Brown makes
history as the
youngest FA Cup
Final
player
PAGE 48

Lives spared by detonation failure

Bridge bombs were IRA's biggest ever

By MICHAEL EVANS AND STEWART TENDLER

TWO Semtex bombs that failed to go off under Hammersmith Bridge on Wednesday night were the biggest ever planted by the IRA on mainland Britain.

The planned Easter Rising anniversary "spectacular" — using 30 to 40lb of Semtex — would have blasted the structure of the west London bridge and threatened the lives of hundreds of residents in nearby flats had the detonators worked properly.

Yesterday, as urgent checks were made on other bridges, the Government and police were studying the implications of the IRA's apparent intention of causing such a massive explosion in advance of the Northern Ireland elections on June 30.

John Major warned Sinn Féin once again to have "no truck" with violence and said that unless the bombings stopped, it would be barred from the all-party peace talks starting on June 10.

Scotland Yard said that the Hammersmith bomb was designed to kill, maim and cause huge damage to the suspension bridge as well as transport chaos. One expert said that had the IRA placed the explosives along the main cable, the whole structure would have collapsed.

At first, police investigating two minor explosions at the south end of the bridge assumed that the IRA had planted a small device, similar to that which exploded in the Boltons, South Kensington, last week. That contained half a pound of Semtex.

However, Scotland Yard said yesterday that between 30 and 40lb of the Czech-made commercial high explosive had been found in two briefcase-sized wooden boxes on the unlit towpath. The detonators had exploded, but the Semtex had failed to ignite.

Much larger devices have been planted and exploded — including the Docklands bomb in February and the one at Bishopsgate in the City exactly three years ago — but they were largely constructed from home-made, fertiliser-based explosives.

Wednesday's attack, on the anniversary of the Easter Rising in Dublin on April 24, 1916, came after a new warning from senior Royal Ulster Constabulary officers to chief constables this week that the IRA was concentrating on mainland Britain.

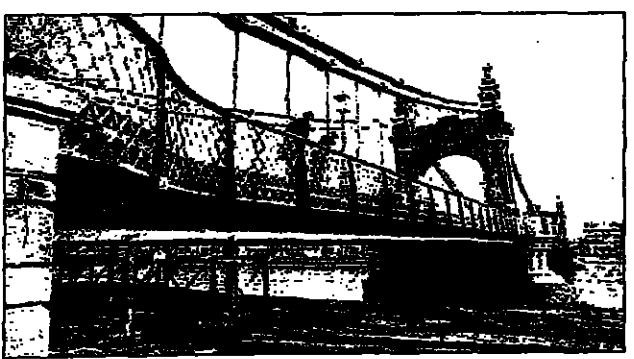
However, even the RUC was shocked by the size of the device. "Normally the IRA don't like to waste so much Semtex in one device," one Ulster security expert said.

It also suggested that the IRA may have a large amount of Semtex stored on the mainland, having continued rearming throughout the 17-month ceasefire.

Security sources said the bomb was likely to have been the work of one or two men with only adequate bomb-making skills. Even if the detonators had worked efficiently and set off the explosives, the position of the bomb would have meant that some of the blast would have dissipated.

Security sources said they did not believe that the attack meant that the most extreme members of the Provisional IRA Army Council had rejected the political path pursued by Sinn Féin. Rather, IRA leaders believed that bomb explosions played a valuable part in pressuring the Government to offer political concessions.

They may have taken comfort from the fact that within days of the Docklands bomb in February, which killed two people and caused more than £100 million of damage, John Major announced the date for all-party talks.



Hammersmith Bridge: bombs were on the towpath

Bridge bombers, page 7



Jonathan Jones celebrating his freedom with Cheryl Tooz yesterday after being cleared of killing her parents

Release a 'victory for love and truth'

By CAROL MIDDLEY

JONATHAN JONES, the businessman jailed for murdering his girlfriend's parents, was freed by the Court of Appeal yesterday after three judges took five minutes to decide that the convictions were unsafe.

Cheryl Tooz, his partner of 15 years who had fought a long and dedicated campaign to prove his innocence, ran to the dock and kissed him through the iron bars as the decision was announced. She said she would fight on to find whoever did shoot Harry and Megan Tooz at their farmhouse in Llanharry, Mid Glamorgan, in July 1993.

Mr Jones, 36, who had sat pale and gaunt throughout the four-day hearing, closed his eyes and slumped in his seat as Lord Justice Rose said: "This court is of the clear view that these convictions are unsafe for reasons which we shall give on a future occasion. Accordingly, the convictions will be quashed and the defendant will be discharged."

Outside the court, Mr Jones said that he was furious at an announcement by South Wales police that they would not be launching a fresh investigation into the murders, adding: "We will be pressing for a continuation of these investigations by a competent authority."

Miss Tooz, who now hopes to start a family and may even go back to live at the farmhouse which is at present being rented out, said that the judge's ruling was a victory for love and truth. "My confidence in Jonathan never faltered. It has been a long fight but my fight is not over yet. I have got Jonathan released. My intention is to carry on and find out who killed my parents."

Continued on page 3, col 6

Three new CJD cases found in commuter town

By JEREMY LAURANCE, JOANNA BAILE AND PETER FOSTER

THREE people have developed Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in a Kent town where BSE, "mad cow" disease, was first identified.

Two of the victims, from Ashford, are men aged 39 and 36, and a brain biopsy has confirmed that one is suffering from the new variant of CJD which has been linked with BSE in beef. The third victim, a woman aged 59, is thought to have the form of CJD that affects older people.

The two men bring to 14 the total of confirmed and suspected cases of the new variant of CJD which triggered a Europe-wide scare over British beef. The new variant affects the young; the other form is rare in people under 40. A fourth patient from the area, a 29-year-old woman solicitor from Canterbury, died of CJD last month.

Barry Baker, 29, a father of two, from High Halden, near Tenterden, has been in hospital for the past three months. Before his condition was recognised, he was treated at the mental health unit of the William Harvey hospital. Mr Baker, a self-employed woodcutter, is now in a different part of the hospital and his condition is said to be very poor. His partner, Esther, declined to comment yesterday. The couple have two daughters aged five and two.

The other male suspected CJD sufferer is Graham Brown, 36, a fireman from Ashford who has been cared for by his sister and her husband. Colleagues at Maidstone Fire Station said Mr Brown, "Hovis" to his workmates, was a member of the station's Red Watch. It was Colin Whitaker, an Ashford veterinary surgeon, who diagnosed the first case of BSE in cattle in 1985.

Legal challenge, page 2

NatWest fined by watchdog

National Westminster Bank has been fined £75,000 by the City regulator responsible for fund managers on two charges of breaking rules relating to its tax-free Personal Equity Plan business, which has 70,000 customers. Page 25

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Shops hope for VAT bonanza

By JON ASHWORTH

SHOPS and discount stores selling goods on interest-free credit could be free to reclaim up to £5 billion in overpaid VAT, after a landmark ruling in the Court of Appeal. The case covers everything from washing machines to carpets, and could start a discount war among store chains.

Customs & Excise plans to appeal to the Lords against the ruling, which covers goods sold on interest-free credit from the day VAT was introduced on April 1, 1973. Shoppers will not be able to seek discounts on goods paid for.

Blow to Customs, page 2

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



Sail across the Channel for half price, in Weekend

What Labour would mean for your money, in Weekend Money
32 pages of home style and inspiration, in the Magazine

Cup hero wins ball back after 30 years' extra time

By BILL FROST

A much-scuffed English soccer icon of questionable provenance is set to come bouncing home after a 30-year exile in a far-flung corner of a foreign field.

Rival tabloids were engaged in a bidding war last night for possession of the ball which Geoff Hurst slid past the West German goalkeeper three times in the World Cup Final at Wembley in 1966.

The Sun showed early promise but in the second half of the day the Daily Mirror appeared to gain supremacy with a reported offer of £80,000 for a talisman that fans hope will restore the fortunes of the England side.

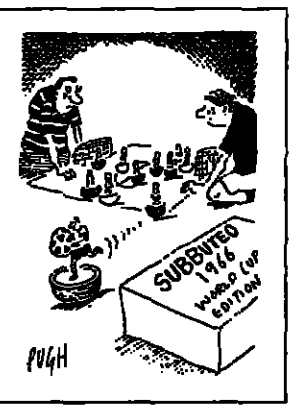
ball's official guardian. However, he failed to notice that his prize had been taken from the field by the West German striker, Helmut Haller.

Yesterday Herr Haller, after much badgering from the British media, agreed to give us back our icon.

However, doubts have been raised over the ball's provenance, with at least two serious contenders in the frame and a host of substitutes waiting on the bench.

Herr Haller had previously told the press that the ball was lost. Yesterday he said that it had lain neglected in the cellar of his son, Jürgen.

Urged on by The Sun and then the Daily Mirror, he agreed to hand the ball over in return for a donation to a children's cancer charity.



"British people have been pestering me. They have been phoning me for the past three days, saying that the ball belonged to England," he said from his Augsburg home.

Mr Hurst himself, yesterday the property of The Sun for a reported £2,500, is convinced the ball is his. "It's a custom when you score a hat-trick in a game, certainly in the World Cup Final, to keep the ball," he said.

Herr Haller said yesterday that after the final he stuffed the ball up his shirt. For 30 years he believed that a local businessman had lost it while he had the ball on loan. He said he had been confused over the ball's fate. He divorced his first wife and Jürgen went to live with her.

Jürgen, 34, said: "It was hard to part with it because it was a personal memento, but last night I decided to give it to my father."

Leading article, page 21



Jürgen Haller yesterday with the disputed ball



TV & RADIO 46, 47
WEATHER 24
CROSSWORDS 24, 48

LETTERS 21
OBITUARIES 23
BERNARD LEVIN 20

ARTS 35-37
CHESS & BRIDGE 45
COURT & SOCIAL 22

SPORT 42-46, 48
VALERIE GROVE 19
LAW REPORT 40

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Playground sneer exposes head prefect

Perhaps for the first time since he became a national figure, Tony Blair conducted himself in the Commons yesterday in a way that looked shabby. It was a gift which the Prime Minister managed to turn, but only partially, to his advantage.

The Labour leader chose to sneer at John Major on the defeat the previous night of part of the Government's Divorce Bill.

A coalition of MPs, including four members of the Cabinet, had voted to extend the "cooling off" period in certain divorces. The Tories had permitted their MPs a "free vote" on this, as it was an issue of conscience.

Mr Blair used his questions

to the Prime Minister to mock. His assault, founded, though on television it may have looked more impressive.

Decrying the Divorce Bill reverse, the Labour leader asked when the Prime Minister was going to "talk tough" with his Cabinet.

Sir Edward Heath's face as Blair repeated his taunts about the free vote was a picture of derision.

It would be interesting to subject Blairian prose over the past two years to the sort of computer analysis that literary scholars use to delve into Shakespeare's psyche.

When confronted, Blair is given to interjecting "look" (as in "look here") into his speech. He is fond of what you might



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

call boss-words. Phrases like "talk tough", "sort out", "get a grip" — the vocabulary of mastery and control — would be picked up repeatedly by our wordsearch. Blair relishes a high-noon quality and likes his prose to walk tall.

To deride opponents he habitually chooses the vocabulary of weakness, indiscipline, doubt, ambiguity and hesitation. His favourite stick with which to beat the Government is the grown-up version of "cowardly-cowardly custard". Your legs are made of mus-

tard. It is remarkable how seldom, and cautiously, he chooses instead to argue that the Government is wrong.

Likewise with critics within his own party: avoiding the substantive argument, Blair remarks that there is "no going back" — as though his critics' error had been in some way to falter, to fail to face up to the future.

Those whom it would be absurd to call cowards are accused instead of being sick in the head. It will escape none who has

been to boarding school that such are the traits of one of nature's head prefects. We learnt at school that the best way to handle these people is not to cross them, but to give them more rope and wait. Fate is perhaps waiting to give Mr Blair furlongs more.

John Major has almost the opposite problem, as yesterday's exchange showed. He had a good case, a moral case, and a simple one: that free votes for MPs on matters of conscience were something a Prime Minister should be proud to allow.

He could have stated this crisply, as if to some sanctimonious whippersnapper whose below-the-belt punch had failed ludicrously. Instead Mr

Major became tremendously indignant.

He railed against Mr Blair as might a child who had been falsely accused by an adult. On and on he went, his voice almost breaking with righteous anger by the end.

Though noisily supported throughout by the government benches, the Prime Minister's case did not grow stronger by its ever more strident repetition.

Such was his irritation that one began to wonder whether Blair might not be right after all to suspect a cock-up.

The Prime Minister won; but, for a man with the steely core that Major possesses, it is odd how often he chooses to plate it in tin.

New EU eye test for lorry drivers delayed

The Government is to postpone the introduction of a new European Union eye test for lorry drivers, which critics claim will cost 3,000 people their jobs. Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, said that introduction would be put back six months to January 1, 1997.

The test will require drivers to have adequate sight in both eyes without glasses or contact lenses, rather than just one eye as now. The Transport Department said the proposed changes were highly complex and the Government needed more time to consider the issues raised. Graham Allen, a Labour transport spokesman, said the decision was "a victory for common sense".

New transport policy paper, page 5

Pupils protest over head

Hundreds of pupils at a grant-maintained school protested when governors deprived the head teacher over expense claims. Len Brazier, head of the 1,500-pupil Gilbert School in Colchester, Essex, was dismissed for gross negligence in February after an 18-month dispute. A five-hour appeal hearing by five governors overturned the full governing body's decision and reinstated him with a written warning.

Rocket range rejected

The Ministry of Defence's plan to use the Otterburn area of Northumberland National Park for live firings of the Army's multiple-launch rocket system was rejected by the county council's policy and resources committee. The decision is expected to be supported by the full council on May 15. The scheme would have involved building new tracks over the moors and a maintenance depot.

Peanut butter warning

Children who have a family history of allergies should avoid eating nuts before their third birthday and possibly up to their seventh to avoid the risk of developing a potentially fatal reaction, doctors say. Giving peanut butter to infants too soon after weaning may lead to early sensitisation to nuts and a lifetime of serious risk, says Dr Pamela Ewan, writing in the *British Medical Journal*.

Corrupt PC jailed

A policeman was jailed for three years at St Albans Crown Court after offering to lose police files on drink-drivers in return for cash. PC Roger Greene, 32, used Thames Valley Police notepaper to type letters to accused motorists. He asked for between £300 and £500 to ensure the case went no further. Greene, of Woodley, Reading, was convicted of five charges of corruption.

Scotland's landed lairds

Half of Scotland is owned by 608 people while the number of foreigners buying large tracts of land in the past 25 years has increased four-fold, according to a new book. *Who Owns Scotland*, by Andy Wightman, lists the top 100 private lairds. Buccleuch Estates is Scotland's biggest landowner with 261,600 acres and the National Trust for Scotland, founded 25 years ago, is in second place.

Tube death demand

A coroner has urged London Underground to tighten safety on old rolling stock following an inquest into the death of a computer student at Stockwell station, south London. A jury at Southwark Coroners Court returned a verdict of accidental death after being told that Harish Jadhavi Bhardia died when he was dragged down the tunnel as a train left the station.

Rattle wins culture prize

The conductor Sir Simon Rattle has won the annual £30,000 Shakespeare Award, whose previous recipients include Graham Greene and Harold Pinter. The Alfred Toepfer Foundation, presenting the prize in Hamburg, noted that Sir Simon had "rejected the jet-set attitudes of many of his colleagues and has remained loyal to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra for over 16 years".

Chances of early tax cuts are dented by court ruling on VAT

By JON ASHWORTH

SHOPS that have sold goods on interest-free credit could reclaim up to £5 billion in VAT after a landmark ruling in the Court of Appeal yesterday. It held that Customs and Excise has been wrong in charging tax on interest-free deals.

An appeal will be made to the House of Lords but, if yesterday's judgment is upheld, it would limit further the Chancellor's scope for tax cuts before the general election. A bill of £5 billion is the equivalent of 5p on income tax.

The ruling covers the difference between the amount nominally charged for goods bought under interest-free credit and the amount the retailer actually receives. For

instance, a shopper buying a sofa interest-free for £480 would pay by instalments to a finance company. The company would keep about £30 to cover interest charges and pay £450 to the retailer.

Until yesterday retailers paid VAT on the full amount, including the £30. Yesterday's ruling accepted that they should pay VAT only on the £450 and were entitled to be reimbursed for money they had paid in the past, dating back to the introduction of VAT in 1973.

The case was brought by the Kingsway Furniture Group, parent company to Primback Ltd, which is in liquidation but which will now receive a back-payment of £2.75 million. Customs said that other claims would have to wait for

the House of Lords appeal, which is unlikely to be heard before next year.

However, tax specialists said retailers would be free to reclaim surplus VAT immediately. Individual shoppers will not be able to seek extra discounts on goods already paid for. The real benefit would come in future months, when lower VAT charges would be passed on to the consumer.

Peter Jenkins, VAT partner in the accountants Ernst & Young, said: "It is a massive reversal for Customs, and means, in effect, that retailers can claim back to 1973. This is another large case that they have lost."

Hugh Mainprice, one of the country's leading VAT experts who heads the firm responsible for the victory, said: "Although the decision was based on the sale of furniture it has established a precedent for a large range of consumer durables, including cameras, household goods such as washing machines and cookers, cameras, carpets, cars and other goods offered for sale on interest-free credit terms."

The Retail Credit Research Group said that interest-free credit accounted for 17 per cent of its members' sales, or some £2.1 billion.



Douglas Hogg, Agriculture Minister, leaving a Cabinet meeting yesterday

Farmers win legal right to challenge global beef ban

By PHILIP WEBSTER IN LONDON AND CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

FARMERS won approval yesterday for a legal challenge to the European Union's worldwide ban on British beef amid fresh doubts over whether the Government will be able to secure its early lifting.

Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, insisted in the Commons that Britain's latest plan to slaughter up to 42,000 more cows will only be carried out if there are clear indications that the ban will be eased. But Brussels gave notice that it would not be bound by any "preconditions" on the lifting of the ban, and British government sources continued to downplay the likelihood of anything more than a possible easing of the ban at Monday's meeting of farm ministers.

While Jacques Santer, the President of the European Commission, called the proposals a step in the right direction, Commission officials said that the scheme amounted to "a set of ideas" rather than a formal plan. In Germany, officials said Britain's reluctance to commit itself to a bigger slaughter programme would not win it much sympathy at the farm council.

Mr Hogg told MPs that the Government was developing a "more flexible approach" to selecting cattle. But he stressed he had made clear to Herr Fischer that he would only consider implementing the slaughter scheme in the context of the lifting of the ban.

Conservative Euro-sceptics continued their calls for a tougher line against Europe. William Cash called for the suspension of Britain's payments to the EU, which he said would not be illegal. "This is purely a cash-flow situation. If Michael Heseltine

has said that he paid his own bills late then so can we."

Christopher Gill, a former farmer and vice-chairman of the Tory backbench agricultural committee, asked Mr Hogg for an assurance that if the ban was not lifted by the EU next week, he would "assert the authority of this House" by giving instructions in his department to start reissuing export licences for British beef to non-EU countries.

Meanwhile a judge gave the NFU and other representatives of the meat industry the go-ahead for an urgent referral of the ban to the European Court of Justice.

The union won permission to seek a judicial review of the Ministry of Agriculture and Customs and Excise refusals to issue health certificates for live animals destined for export and against the decision to withdraw certificates required for the export of the meat of bovine animals slaughtered in the UK. The application is in reality a vehicle for the British to seek a European Court ruling against the ban.

The restrictions stop them supplying the names and pictures of 47 fans arrested in riots after Holland's match against Germany in Rotterdam on Wednesday night. Two people were stabbed and a state of emergency declared.

Police and security experts played down the implications at a Council of Europe summit held in London yesterday to discuss policing the June tournament. Chief Inspector Lex Heys, of the Dutch football vandalism unit, said his country's football association was working with the English FA to ban 300 fans barred from stadiums in Holland.

"Our Government has a database of hooliganism over the last five years but we are not allowed to give a large blacklist to other authorities," he said. Chief Inspector Leys, whose Utrecht-based squad is the counterpart of the UK's National Criminal Intelligence Service football unit, added: "We can compensate by sending spotters to identify our hooligans to your police forces and we will do whatever your police ask, such as giving them as much information as we can about the fans' travelling arrangements."

By STEPHEN FARRELL

Euro 96 hooligans cannot be identified

DUTCH police are banned from giving British detectives details of football hooligans they suspect of planning trouble at the Euro 96 championship, detectives admitted yesterday. Strict privacy laws in The Netherlands forbid the disclosure of personal information about Dutch nationals to other countries.

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THE TIMES

Ra fa rule

A RARE privilege

celebrate the birth of a new century with the family of an important man made to be part of the jury.

Family and friends of the murdered black man, Stephen Lawrence, fought for them to be the people responsible for the death, including Mr Justice Croom.

Stephen's father, Paul Lawrence, said: "I believe that the jury has happened to be the best jury in the world."

The jury at the trial was formally told that the four men were not guilty of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, who was killed in London. They were being at the trial when the verdict was reached, near a bus stop on April 22, 1991.

The victim's friends claimed that the jury could not get justice. They were critical of the original police investigation, claiming that the investigation should have been sooner. Mr Lawrence, 47, and his wife, private prosecution, decided there was no evidence to bring to court.

Mr Justice Croom said on Wednesday that the case for the men was weak. Dwayne Brooks, the best friend who was attacked, to go before the court.

There is no dispute about the fact that the men were not guilty of the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

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Race murder case fails after judge rules out evidence

By RICHARD DUCE AND LIN JENKINS

A RARE private murder prosecution collapsed yesterday after the judge told the dead man's family that the evidence of an important witness was unsafe to be put before the jury.

Family and friends of the murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence, who have fought for three years to find the people responsible for his death, immediately criticised Mr Justice Curtis's ruling. Stephen's father, Neville Lawrence, said: "I believe in fairness and I don't think what has happened today is fair."

The jury at the Old Bailey was formally ordered to return not-guilty verdicts against three unemployed white men: Neil Acourt, 20, Luke Knight, 19, and Gary Dobson, 20, all from southeast London. They had denied being at the scene when Stephen was stabbed to death near a bus stop in Eltham on April 22, 1993.

The victim's family and friends claimed the ruling showed that black people could not get justice in Britain. They were critical of the original police investigation, claiming that local information should have been acted on sooner. Mr Lawrence, a builder, and his wife took out a private prosecution after the Crown Prosecution Service decided there was not enough evidence to bring to court.

Mr Justice Curtis ruled late on Wednesday that it was unsafe for the evidence of Dwayne Brooks, Stephen's best friend who witnessed the attack, to go before the jury.

Parents' fight goes on

A THREE-YEAR fight for justice by the parents of Stephen Lawrence will not end with yesterday's acquittals. Lawyers acting for Neville and Doreen Lawrence said that should any new evidence emerge linking someone to the murder of their son they would launch criminal proceedings again.

There is no dispute that a gang of up to six youths were responsible for stabbing their son to death.

The Lawrences resisted attempts by left-wing minority groups to hijack the murder for their own causes. They relied instead on the support of the local community, black and white, to help fund their search for the killers. Their son's death did, however, become the focus of anti-racist demonstrations.

the case as a sad figure who still lives with the mental scars of his friend's death. He has been diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder but has refused all offers of treatment.

He admitted being driven by thoughts of revenge from the moment Stephen collapsed in front of him. He telephoned for an ambulance rather than the police because he did not trust them. He was interviewed at length by detectives before they accepted that they were dealing with a racist murder.

Before he went to one identity parade he had worked out that he was expected to pick Neil Acourt. On a subsequent parade he picked Luke Knight and later admitted to a police officer that friends had told him to look for "the scruffiest one" because Mr Knight would have spent some time in the police cells.

He went on to change his story four times about who he believed had wielded the knife that killed Stephen. Mr Justice Curtis ruled that Mr Brooks, for whatever reason, "simply doesn't know if he is on his head or his heels" and that his evidence could lead to the danger of conviction on misidentification. "To do so would amount to injustice, and adding one injustice to another does not cure the injustice done to the Lawrence family."

Imran Khan, the Lawrence family solicitor, said later: "We are extremely disappointed with the judge's ruling and would have hoped the identification evidence could be put before the jury — something that happens in nearly every other case. It must be remembered that we would never have been in this position if the first police inquiry into the murder had gathered sufficient evidence."

A spokeswoman for the Crown Prosecution Service, which dropped the original case in July 1993, said: "The result is clearly a disappointment for Mr and Mrs Lawrence. The CPS would like to take this opportunity to once again express our sympathy at their grief following the tragic death of Stephen."



Neil Acourt, left, and Gary Dobson leaving the Old Bailey after the collapse of the prosecution brought by Stephen Lawrence's parents

Spy film exposed suspects' hatred of blacks

By LIN JENKINS AND RICHARD DUCE

VIDEO surveillance by the police gave a chilling insight into the lives and thoughts of a gang of racist thugs, prime suspects in the Stephen Lawrence case.

In a rare move, detectives put a small box in a flat rented by Neil Acourt after the coroner stopped the inquest because of new evidence. The black box placed near the television was marked "Danger, do not touch".

Those in the flat thought it was a listening device. Indeed, Mr Acourt refused to use the telephone because he thought that was bugged. What the youths did not know was that the box contained a tiny camera that spied on them at intervals over 16 days, recording the extent of their deep-rooted racism and sadistic loathing of the black community.

The youths had spent nearly all their time together since leaving the local comprehensive school for the dole queue. All had grown up on the same

council estate in Eltham, southeast London, and were known to the police.

Mr Acourt, Luke Knight, Gary Dobson and their friends expressed such extreme views that their own lawyers admitted that the recording showed, if nothing else, that they were the sort of people who could have murdered Stephen Lawrence for no better reason than because he was black.

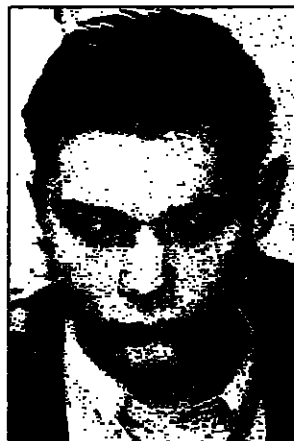
Timothy Kendal, for Mr Knight, told the committal hearing at Beames Magistrates' Court, where the video tape was shown last year: "One cannot help but have feelings of repulsion, of horror and of antipathy to those on the video."

Throughout the tape the men are seen smoking cannabis and handling knives. Mr Acourt stabs furniture and the walls and lunges at the others. Before leaving the flat he tucks a knife into his waistband. They watch football and criticise an "English"

presenter for supporting Cameroon against a European team. Mr Knight says: "English presenters saying 'Oh yeah, we want Cameroon to win this, why the f--- should we want niggers to win it when they're playing something — like Italy or something — like a European f--- team.'" Mr Acourt says: "You rubber-lipped f---. I reckon that every nigger should be chopped up, mate, and left with nothing but f--- stumps."

Mr Knight then recalls Enoch Powell and his visit to Africa. "He came back here saying they were uncivilised and all that and then they started coming over here and he knew, he knew straight away, he was saying 'No, I don't want them here, no f--- niggers. They'll ruin the f---, and he was right, they f--- have ruined it.'"

Mr Acourt concurs. "I wanna write him a letter. Enoch Powell mate, you are the greatest. You are the Don



Luke Knight leaving the court yesterday

of Dons. Get back into Parliament, mate."

They are shown shouting racist abuse at black people and a Chinese woman in a television advertisement. When discussing the Sports Personality of the Year award, Mr Acourt says: "Bollocks you nigger. A macaroon better not win it, mate."

violence they wish to see meted out to blacks. David Norris, who was charged with murder but had the case dismissed by magistrates, says: "I'd go down Catford and places like that, I'd take one of them, skin the black f--- alive, mate, torture him, set him alight."

Three of the five people originally alleged to have killed Stephen Lawrence had previously been acquitted of attacks involving knives.

Mr Acourt and Mr Norris were charged with the attempted murder of Stacey Benfield, a white woman, who was stabbed in the chest in March 1993 in Eltham. They were acquitted at the Old Bailey of a lesser charge after witnesses changed their evidence.

Magistrates also dismissed charges against Jamie Acourt. In another case, he was cleared at Snaresbrook Crown Court last August of wounding a white youth in the chest at a nightclub in Greenwich. He said he acted in self-defence.

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Doubt cast on PM's grammar school pledge

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

Sir George: said there was a perceptible shift in public opinion away from road-building

Sir George: said there was a perceptible shift in public opinion away from road-building

Leading article, page 21

schools to select up to 100 per cent of their pupils rather than the present figure of 10 per cent.

measures against anti-social behaviour and more power for councils to enforce tenancy rules.

The tenants agreed to give evidence to Lord Woolf, who is preparing a report on ways to improve access to justice. They want him to consider setting up panels of specialist judges to deal with cases of bad neighbours and to protect witnesses by allowing them to give evidence anonymously.

"I am very sceptical. I wonder whether the Government means what it says about supporting grammar schools and an awful lot of parents want to know as well. The Prime Minister makes a sweeping statement about a grammar school in every town but does nothing when he has a real chance. It just seems to be another political football."

Milton Keynes Borough Council, which is dominated by Labour and the Liberal Democrats, believes the next school should be comprehensive. It has been refused leave for judicial review of the county council's plan for a grammar school and its appeal against the refusal will be heard later this month.

A spokesman for the Department for Education and Employment said: "Ministers have agreed that no decision should be made on the proposal until the outcome on the leave to apply for judicial review was known."

The Times disclosed last month that Mr Major's policy unit was working on manifestos to plans for a grammar school in every large town, to be established with the backing of groups of parents and business people. Also, Mrs Shephard said that a White Paper to be published in June would propose allowing

Mrs Dewar dismissed this as a weak excuse, adding: "Who runs the country, Milton Keynes Borough Council or John Major?"

Letters, page 21
Education, page 39

A STRIKE by teachers was averted yesterday when the parents of a disruptive pupil agreed to remove him from class. Richard Wadding, 13, will study on the roll at Gladstone School in Bilborough, Nottingham, but will be taught at a special unit near by and at home, at a cost of £1,700 a year.

The teaching union, NASUWT, said that industrial action was looming over a similar case on South Tyneside, after a head teacher's ban on a disruptive teenager had been overturned by an appeal panel.

Staff at Hebburn Comprehensive have voted in favour of action if they are ordered to teach the youth, but his parents have not yet exercised the right to reinstate Eddie

McAtominey, a governor, said the boy had twice attacked teachers.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the NASUWI, said the teachers at Nottingham had shown that parents could not choose the school they wanted, regardless of their child's behaviour.


It was disclosed yesterday that Richard Wilding's mother Rita, 34, had been convicted of attacking a council housing officer who called to discuss repairs. Gerald Bunting, 55, suffered serious spinal injuries four years ago, and can walk only with the aid of crutches.

She was ordered to pay him £100 compensation. Mr Bunting retired from work this week.

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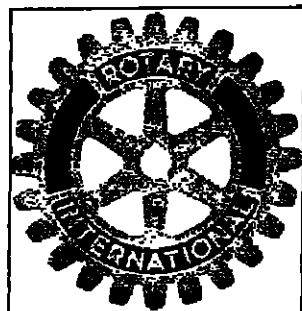
Male bastion falls in the capital but they're still fighting for equality on the beaches

Oldest Rotary Club in Britain votes to admit women

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

ANOTHER refuge of male supremacy has fallen after an overwhelming vote by members of the Rotary Club of London to open its doors to women. Thousands of Rotarians throughout the country, who have long defied demands for such reform, are now expected to face growing pressure to follow the lead of the oldest and biggest of the 1,799 clubs in Britain.

At the third attempt in recent years, members of the London club, of which the Duke of Edinburgh is an honorary member, voted by 59 to 11 at a lunch at the Portman Hotel to end men-only membership. Neville Shulman, the theatrical figure and writer who led the move for reform, said after a heated debate earlier this week: "We would have been ignoring 50 per cent of the population by continuing to bar ladies and that would have been horrendous. It is unacceptable for women



not to have equal standing and I should not have continued my membership if the vote had been lost."

The Rotary Club of London, which has 160 members, was formed in 1911 and was the first to be chartered outside North America. Only about a third of the clubs that comprise Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland have voted to accept women members and only 925 women are registered among a total membership of 62,965. However, the stand taken by the London club may not

be welcomed by all the women of the Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland, whose 31,000 members are wives and widows of Rotarians. Some are asking whether the move might not only diminish the influence of Inner Wheel, but lead to the admission of men.

The question of discrimination against men could be on the agenda when Inner Wheel stages its international convention in Berlin next year. Already some women are members of both organisations. June Dobson, secretary of the association, said: "Some women are happy about Rotary opening its ranks to women. Others are not. That's life. We shall have to look at our membership rules now that Rotary is admitting the ladies."

Female membership of Rotary became an issue in Britain and Ireland after a Supreme Court ruling in the United States in 1987 that Rotary Clubs broke anti-discrimination legislation by restricting membership to men. On this side of the Atlantic it was decided to allow individual clubs to invite whoever they chose as members.

Rotarians deny there has been any groundswell of pressure to admit women and maintain that the gradual movement for change has come from within as the influence of women in business has grown.

Rotary International was founded in 1905 by Paul P. Harris, a Chicago lawyer, and dedicated to fellowship, charitable works, ethical standards in business and all-male company. The name was adopted because meetings were held in rotation in members' offices. Detractors have included George Bernard Shaw who, when asked where he thought the Rotary movement was heading, replied: "To lunch."



Self-proclaimed bastion of reactionary England: Frinton has no wine bars, ice-cream vendors or bingo halls

Seaside town defies tide of progress and rules bar is no place for a lady

By JOANNA BALE

A PROUD bastion of reactionary England has fought off another attempt to drag it into the late twentieth century. The men of Frinton-on-Sea have decided it is just not the sort of place where a woman can simply go out for a drink whenever she likes.

The genteel Essex resort has no pubs or wine bars. It has even managed to keep out other signs of commercialism such as bingo halls and ice-cream vendors. It does have the War Memorial Club which, for 75 years, has been an all-male preserve where women are allowed only as guests on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

When one member dared to put forward a proposal to admit women at other times, it was met with such overwhelming opposition that it was withdrawn even before the annual general meeting today.

The club president, Jack Watling, said yesterday: "I'm afraid Frinton is one of the last bastions of reactionary England. The member, who



They shall not pass: Jack Watling, club president, is adamant that women should not be admitted

wishes to remain anonymous, said he wasn't allowed out unless his wife went with him. "I can only assume that so many people leant on him that he withdrew his proposition."

Mr Watling, an actor who has run a summer theatre in Frinton for 20 years, added: "I don't think women should be admitted. Most wives prefer a chap to go to his club because he can't get up to any mischief and she knows where he is. Even if we did allow them in, my wife said she would never

go because she knows she would not really be welcome."

Stan Shelton, 69, a member for 25 years, is one of a tiny minority who would like women to be allowed in more often. He said: "I proposed a few years ago to allow them in on Wednesdays and Fridays, but it was kicked out lock, stock and barrel. They were complaining that bar takings were slack on those evenings, but they still wouldn't entertain the idea."

"The ones who oppose it most are old codgers like me,

especially those who go lunch-time. They don't want their wives to see what they are drinking, hear them swearing and listen in on what they are talking about."

His wife Win, 76, added: "It is a war memorial club, but they seem to forget that women lost their lives and served in the wars too. It would be nice to go for a quick drink sometimes, rather than a coffee, while we are out shopping. The old boys want to go in there to get away from their missus, but there are some couples who would like to go in too."

For entertainment, the club has dominoes, darts, snooker, billiards, and shove-ha-penny. The club secretary, Ken North, declined to discuss the women's issue. He said: "It's a private club and members are not allowed to talk about what goes on. It's against the rules."

Frinton's unique old-fashioned nature is partly the result of the way that the seafaring Greensward was presented to the town a hundred years ago, on condition that it was never marred by commercial vulgarities.

Catholic gets £22,600 for job bias

A Roman Catholic who suffered religious discrimination when he sought a job with the Northern Ireland Police Authority in 1990 has been awarded £22,600 compensation. Only Protestants were shortlisted for the post of armourer, the Fair Employment Tribunal was told. The unnamed Catholic, as well-qualified as three successful candidates, was deprived "because of his religious belief".

Queen in court

The Queen visited Maidenhead Magistrates' Court at the invitation of the Magistrates' Association and watched a series of mock trials featuring actors in the roles of the accused but real solicitors, magistrates and police.

Red kites killed

Poisoners have disrupted plans to restore the red kite to the country, the RSPB reported. At least four were poisoned in the South and the Midlands and a fifth death was being investigated. Last year 24 pairs of kites bred in England.

Press penalties

Northcliffe Newspapers and Graham Glenn, 49, a former editor of the Gloucester Citizen, were each fined £4,500 for breaching the Magistrates Courts Act of 1980 when reporting a court appearance by Fred West two years ago.

Hunt called off

The search for Christopher Howes, 36, a mine clearance expert from Bristol and his Cambodian translator, taken hostage by Khmer Rouge renegades in the northern provinces of Siem Reap four weeks ago, has been called off.

Rave cancelled

A May Bank Holiday dance music festival in Oxfordshire has been cancelled after protests over traffic congestion. Magistrates refused a licence for the rave at Otmoor Park after being told that last year's event caused eight-mile jams.

Natural habitat of life's eternal deputy

By JON ASHWORTH

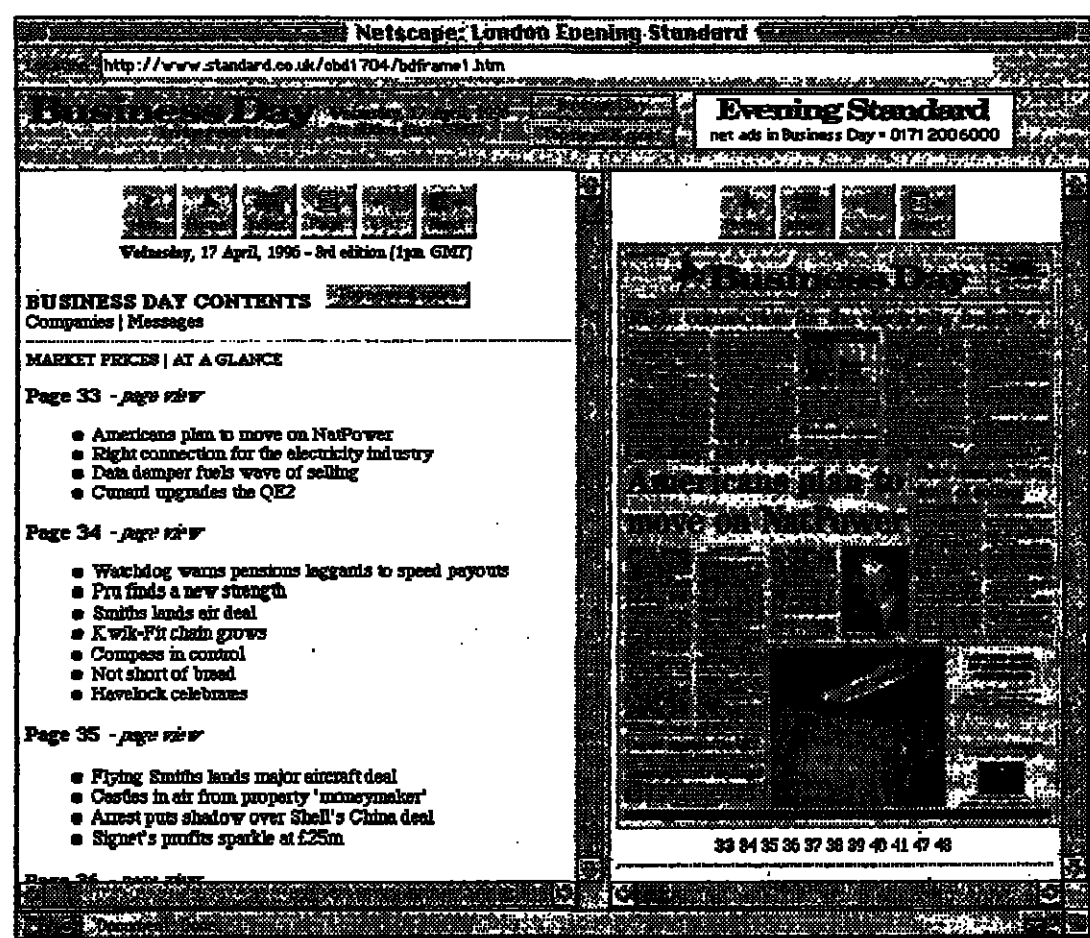
WIDOWS and orphans are typical beneficiaries of Rotary International, which now has more than 1.1 million members in 187 countries. Punctilious meetings and colourful raffish are meat and drink to the average Rotarian, who is more likely than not to be ageing and, quite possibly, your local shopkeeper.

"We are generally regarded as middle-aged, middle-class do-gooders who are a bit fuddy-duddy," David Morehen, general secretary of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland, said. "Our average member

is 55 to 60 years old and probably No 2 in his trade, because No 1 is too busy. Accountants, greengrocers, opticians, headmasters, solicitors. We don't shout about what we do."

Rotary clubs typically comprise local businessmen and professionals, one from each trade, who meet once a week and raise money for worthy causes. Each club works autonomously, providing local services and raising funds. Rotarians in Britain and Ireland recently raised £8 million towards vaccinating Third World children. "We use our business expertise to help the community," Mr Morehen said.

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Farmers abandon Brussels sprouts for eastern promise

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

FARMERS who once grew Brussels sprouts are turning to coriander as an alternative crop. Changing culinary fashions and a long-term decline in demand for what was once a staple vegetable are filling English fields with the spicy and aromatic herb.

Bedfordshire has seen one of the biggest booms in the growing of coriander, *Coriandrum sativum*, a native of the

Mediterranean and the Middle East. Asian entrepreneurs began the trend by leasing land from cash-strapped farmers to produce the herb for the large Asian communities in Luton and Bedford.

Coriander has long been widely used as a flavouring in Indian cooking. Steve Hatcher, of the East Bedfordshire branch of the National Farmers' Union,

said: "Coriander is a labour-intensive crop to grow because it has to be picked by hand. It is not uncommon to see gangs of Asians out in the fields doing the work."

Other farmers have been drawn into growing coriander by the increasing demand for the fresh herb from supermarkets and restaurants in response to the fashion for oriental stir-fry cooking, particularly of the Thai variety,

encouraged by television chefs such as Delia Smith and Keith Floyd. David Gudgeon, who runs 40 acres of market gardens at Shefford, Bedfordshire, began growing coriander ten years ago and has seen a jump in demand in recent years.

He said: "Fresh coriander is very popular, with many people sprinkling it on top of food instead of something more traditionally English, like parsley. I know of at least 15 other farmers in the neighbourhood who are also growing it. Most farmers round here have stopped growing Brussels sprouts. People are just not eating them like they used to 10 to 15 years ago."

Mr Gudgeon grows enough coriander each year to fill 5,000 boxes containing 20 bunches each. He also grows leeks, cabbages, cauliflowers and broccoli but reckons that coriander is now his most valuable crop.

"We sell wholesale to markets in Birmingham, Leicester and London and also supply about 30 local hotels and



Pat Coley harvests coriander in Shefford, Bedfordshire, where fields were once covered in Brussels sprouts

restaurants direct. We start drilling in March and round about now are moving into the peak harvesting period, which lasts through the summer. During the winter supplies are imported."

Caroline Holmes, chairman of the Herb Society, said interest in more unusual

herbs had been greatly stimulated by better education and wider travel.

"Coriander seeds, which are mainly associated with Indian cooking, have been around for a long time but until five years or so ago you would probably have had to grow your own if you wanted the fresh leaf," she

said. "Now all the big supermarkets offer coriander growing in pots or packets of fresh-cut leaves. Other herbs used in Thai cooking, such as lemon grass and garlic chives, are also becoming popular."

Debra Pien, of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau, said: "Coriander

has increased in popularity, particularly since last year and some people would say it is as popular as parsley. This is largely because of the increase in consumption of Indonesian and Eastern cookery." Pots of fresh coriander cost about 80p, while bags of the herb retail at about 60p.

BITTER HERB OF THE PASSOVER



Coriander, one of the bitter herbs eaten at Passover, was said to have been used by the Greek physician Hippocrates (Nicole Veasey writes). The plant, whose seeds were discovered in the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs, arrived in Britain with the Romans, who used it as an aromatic stimulant and spice. In folk medicine it was used to treat aches and pains and *Martindale's Pharmacopoeia* said that in excess coriander could cause nausea and

diarrhoea. More recently coriander was distilled to form an oil recommended as a cure for flatulence. In China those who ate the herb were thought to attain immortality but this heightened feeling was perhaps a result of the plant's mildly narcotic properties. The Romans used the seeds to flavour bread. Nowadays they are used to flavour gin, liqueurs, frankfurter sausages, chewing gum and cigarette tobacco.

PHOTOGRAPH: ANTHONY BLAKE

Sweet scallops give a taste of season's best

WEEKEND SHOPPING

UNEXPECTED coastal winds have resulted in poor landings of fish and shortages of several species. Herrings and sprats are not available. The best alternative is Scottish kippers at about £1.20 a lb.

The seasonal best buy is fresh scallops, from about 60p each for small ones to £1.20 for those weighing 4-5oz. Scallops have a sweet creamy flesh and, because of their delicate texture, should be fried lightly in a little butter. Serve with spring onions, tomatoes and rocket for a delicious seasonal salad.

The British new potato season has begun. The first Jersey Royals are in the shops at £1.29 for 500g. By next week the price will be down to 99p. Announced promotions include:

Asda: fresh beef frying steak £4.38 a kg, fresh pork chops £4.38 a kg, strawberries 95p a lb, grilling mushrooms 59p a lb, spring greens 99p a kg, daffodils 29p a bunch. Budgens: unsmoked rindless Dutch bacon rashers £1.99 for 400g, fresh chicken drumsticks £2.29 for 1.1kg, tomatoes 79p for six, soft white finger rolls 49p for six. Co-op: fresh Aberdeen Angus rump steak £8.99 a kg, fresh whole medium chicken £3.49 for 1.6kg, grated mature cheddar £1.15 for 250g, smoked salmon pâté 79p for 112g, Onken Bio yoghurt 89p for 500g. Harrods: selection of fresh crudites £1.49 for 250g, spicy chicken and mango baguettes

£2.50 each, prosciutto alla brace charcoal-cooked Italian ham £1.49 for 100g, Peral de Brebis cheeses £3.50 each. Iceland: lemon-butter chicken Kiev £1.49 for two, unsmoked back bacon £2.29 for 390g, prawn and broccoli lasagne £1.99 for two, baby carrots 69p for 907g, McCain oven chips £1.99 for 1.8kg, sticky toffee cheesecake £1.49. Marks & Spencer: cannelloni for two £2.49, tagliatelle for one £1.49, pesto sauce £1.39, Tuscan olive oil £3.29, New Zealand Cox's apples £1.49 for six, raspberries £1.49 for 125g. Morrisons: mackerel 79p a lb, fresh salmon steaks £2.29 a lb, spinach and ricotta cannelloni 89p for 350g, garlic bread twin pack 99p, light cottage cheese 65p for 227g, frozen hash browns 89p for 750g. Sainsbury's: rainbow trout £4.69 a kg, British crumbed ham 59p a 1/2 lb, New Zealand extra mature cheddar £2.19 a lb, potato salad 39p a 1/2 lb, new potatoes 25p a lb, Packham pears 39p a lb, frozen strawberry and cream cheesecake £1.49. Sainsbury's: fresh New Zealand bone-in lamb leg £5.49 a kg, 12 fresh chicken drumsticks £2.69 for 1.2kg, fresh plaice fillets £6.40 a kg, Parma ham £1.25 for 100g, Gallia melon £1.49, whole cucumber 49p, golden delicious apples 89p a kg, dolcelatte cheese £4.49 a kg. Somerfield: boneless loin pork chops £6.61 a kg, boneless shoulder of lamb £6.33 a kg, Scotch eggs 59p for two, asparagus tips £1.69 for 125g, red potatoes £2.38 for 5kg, oranges £1.35 for 1.5kg, rhubarb 64p a lb. Tesco: lamb loin chops £9.69 a kg, cod fillet £1.95 a lb, whole lemon sole £2.79 a lb, rainbow trout £1.87 a lb, New Zealand half-shell mussels 39p a 1/2 lb, broccoli 79p a lb, Jaffa oranges £1.19 for eight. Waitrose: British roasting beef £5.99 a kg, fresh poussin £2.35 for 800g, skate wings £2.59 a lb, salmon en croûte £2.49 for 400g, stringless beans 99p for 250g, Shropshire Blue cheese £2.49 a lb, crème fraîche £1.39 for 500ml.

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Voters doubt that Blair's government will live up to his party's promises

New supporters betray lack of faith in Labour



Blair liked better than Labour's policies

By PETER RIDDELL

THE public has become more dubious about whether a Labour government would keep its promises and deliver improved living standards and welfare services, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

The poll, undertaken last weekend, shows that, despite Labour's continuing high ratings, many of the party's newly won supporters are sceptical about its ability to deliver on its promises. The latest poll, and previous ones, suggests that these switchers to Labour are motivated more by dislike of the Government and liking for Tony Blair

personally than by enthusiasm for the party's policies. MORI asked eight questions about expectations for a Labour government which were previously asked in March 1995. Public confidence in Labour's ability to deliver has declined over the 13 months for six of the eight measures, particularly improving living standards, keeping promises, improving welfare state services and curbing unemployment. Some of this could, paradoxically, reflect the Labour leadership's attempt to lower expectations. By contrast, Mr Blair has succeeded in reassuring middle-class voters about its intentions on tax and over the influence of trade unions on a Labour government. A net balance of 50 per cent of the public believes that Labour would, rather than would not, increase income tax. This is virtually unchanged on last year. But the net balance among the middle classes has declined from plus 62 to plus 56 per cent.

The number expecting that a Labour government would be controlled by the unions, less than those expecting it would not, has declined from minus 19 to minus 21 per cent, but the drop among the middle classes is from minus 17 to minus 26 per cent.

The most worrying point for Mr Blair is that new Labour switchers, who have started backing the party since 1992, are more sceptical than party supporters generally about whether a Labour government would keep its promises and improve living standards.

While Labour supporters expect that in government will, rather than will not, improve living standards by a net margin of plus 18 points, among switchers to Labour

the net balance is minus six points. A net balance of half the switchers believes that Labour would increase income tax, roughly the same as for the public as a whole, but comparing with a net balance of 36 points among Labour supporters generally.

These switchers believe even more than other Labour supporters that a future Government would give a strong voice for Britain in Europe and would not be controlled by the trade unions.

These switchers are among

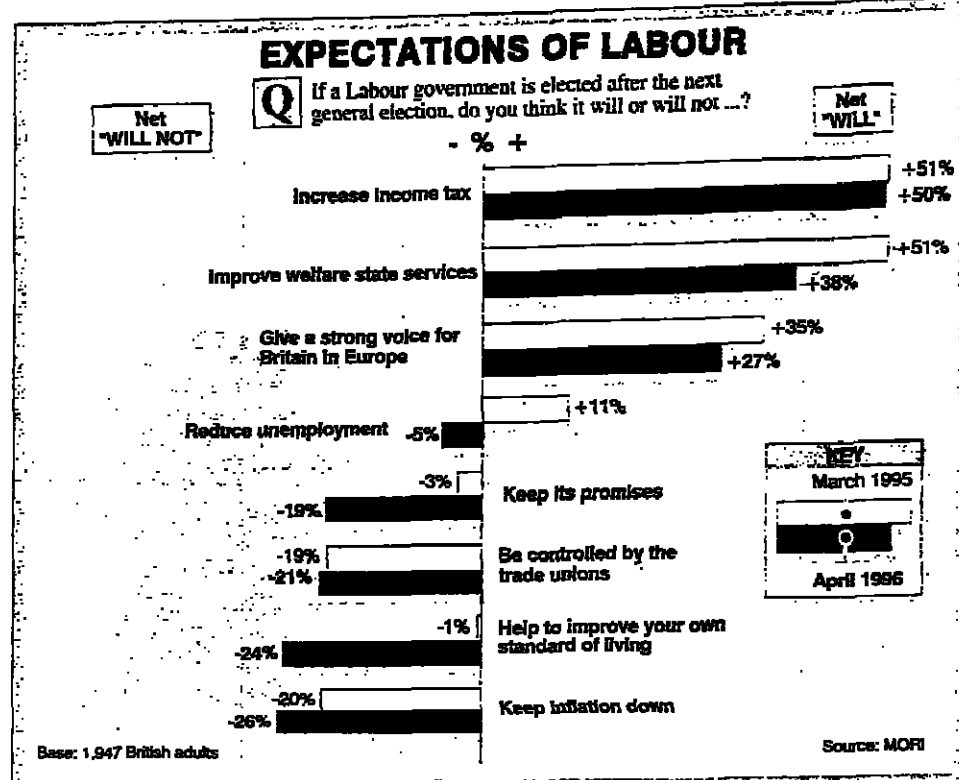
the strongest admirers of Mr Blair's performance as leader, while 96 per cent of them are dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country. This is higher than in any other group.

These poll findings underline that Labour's problem is the credibility of its policy pledges. Qualitative research about the attitudes of such switchers shows they are more dissatisfied with the Tories than committed to Labour.

The poll shows that the number of people mentioning

Europe as among the most important issues facing Britain has risen from 16 to 20 per cent, the highest level since last June. The number listing the NHS as an important issue has declined in recent months from about 40 per cent to 34 per cent, only just above education on 33 per cent. Unemployment remains top.

MORI interviewed 1,947 adults on April 16 to 22. Voting intention figures exclude those who say they would not vote (10 per cent), are undecided (7 per cent) or who refuse to name a party (3 per cent).



Council boost for Lib Dems

THE Liberal Democrats may do better in the local elections next Thursday than their recent national opinion poll ratings have suggested (Peter Riddell writes).

In their latest poll for *The Times*, MORI asked people how they would vote in the local elections on May 2.

This question was asked only in the 44 per cent of the country with elections then.

Excluding those saying they were certain not to vote or don't know, 26 per cent support the Tories, 50 per cent back Labour and 21 per cent the Liberal Democrats. The figures are virtually the

same for just those saying they are certain to vote. In these areas, 28 per cent say they would back the Tories if there was a general election tomorrow, 54 per cent support Labour and 17 per cent the Liberal Democrats. The same contrast has been true in previous local elections.

Brown must back tax reassurance with some substance

THE Labour leadership is in a bother again about tax — not about the details of its plans (which are genuinely undecided) but about how to handle the continuing political furore over the issue. This is about the only area where Conservative Central Office has been able to put much pressure on Labour — and where the party's delaying tactics appear unconvincing. Labour leaders may even be relieved that the latest MORI poll shows no increase in the high proportion who already expect that a Labour government would raise income tax.

Tax has become the symbolic issue for both the Tories and Labour. Tory strategists believe that

their attacks on Labour's tax plans increased public doubts about the Opposition's fitness to govern in both 1987 and 1992. And they are trying to do the same again. Labour leaders, and particularly Gordon Brown, have drawn the same lesson and have been doing everything possible to avoid giving ammunition to the Tories on tax.

This vacuum has given ample opportunity for Central Office to seize on even vague comments about higher taxes by Labour front-benchers or surveys of the views of Labour MPs and candidates (as in today's *Tribune*). The divisions are mainly of detail and have been magnified in importance by the leadership's refusal to spell out

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

whether, and at what levels, higher rates might be paid.

The real differences between the parties on tax are small. As David Lipsey argues in the new collection of essays, *What Needs to Change* (edited by Giles Radice and published yesterday), governments have an influence on levels of spending, and hence taxes, only at the margin, as, if not more, important are the state of the economy and long-term demographic trends. After all, the Tories have found it hard even to contain the growth of the overall tax burden. The level might be slightly

higher under Labour, but probably not much.

The better-off, who have done very well under the Tories, would probably pay more under Labour. But the top marginal rate, now 40 per cent, would almost certainly not rise to the 60 per cent level it was under the Tories until 1988, let alone to the pre-1979 peak of 83 per cent. Labour wants to hold down the tax burden for those on average earnings and below.

But even if the Tory charges are grossly exaggerated, there are legitimate questions about Labour's broad spending and tax strategy. The Labour leadership believes it cannot win by being candid now. Mr Brown is right that it is absurd

to expect Labour to spell out its precise tax plans now or in its draft manifesto in June when public borrowing figures are being revised upwards and the fiscal outlook will not be clear until after the November Budget.

Labour does not think it can, or should, copy Paddy Ashdown and announce "target taxes" for specific ends like nursery places and free eye and dental check-ups. That approach, Labour argues, may offer a distinctive, niche appeal for the Liberal Democrats, but it begs questions about overall spending and tax plans for a party seeking to be the next government. If Mr Brown did announce a new top rate of tax now, the Tories would then

press for other figures about tax plans and the process could not be controlled. The problems with detail have been shown in the criticism of his recent ideas about reallocating child benefit for 16 to 18 years olds.

The leadership believes that all Mr Brown can, and should do, is to restate the general principles of tax strategy. But this may not dampen speculation. The public is dissatisfied with the Tories, but, as the latest poll shows, many voters have doubts about what Labour would do in office. Labour has no choice but to put some substance behind its general words of reassurance.

PETER RIDDELL

MP seeks damages over Tory 'libel'

By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

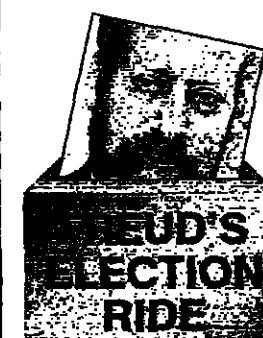
BRIAN MAWHINNEY faces the prospect of legal action over allegations in a Conservative Central Office dossier. Solicitors for Tom Clarke, MP for Monklands West and a member of the Shadow Cabinet, demanded an apology yesterday from the Tory party chairman, substantial damages and costs for what they called "a gross libel".

They claim that Mr Clarke was falsely accused in a document called *The Labour Party's Un-American Activities*, issued by the Tories to coincide with Tony Blair's recent visit to the United States. The MP is said to have been falsely described as having been a member of "a secretive group" called *The Supper Club* — a left-wing faction which was concerned about Neil Kinnock's leadership — and having been opposed to American and British intervention in the Gulf War.

Mr Clarke said *The Mail on Sunday* had apologised and paid damages in 1991 after similar allegations had been printed. He added: "I am deeply hurt and angered, particularly as I have always had many friends and colleagues in the United States."

Tory officials said the matter was being examined.

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MP seeks damages over Tory 'libel'

BY JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

MR MAWHINNEY has a prospect of legal action over allegations in a Conservative Central Office dossier that he was a member of the Shadow Cabinet. The dossier, which was leaked to the press, contained a gross libel against Mr Mawhinney. The Conservative Party has agreed to pay him £100,000 in damages. The dossier was part of a campaign to undermine Mr Mawhinney's position as a senior Tory MP. It contained a number of false and defamatory statements about his private life and his political views. Mr Mawhinney has now taken legal action against the Conservative Party for libel. The case is expected to go to court in the near future.

MPs are planning more trouble for divorce reforms

BY JILL SHERMAN AND JAMES LANDALE

THE Government's controversial divorce reform laws look likely to run into more trouble next week with Labour joining Tory rebels in backing fresh amendments to the Bill. Yesterday the John Major government vowed to carry on with the legislation despite a rebellion by 165 Tory MPs that resulted in a humiliating defeat for the Government on Wednesday night.

After a meeting of the Cabinet yesterday morning, ministers agreed to press ahead with the final stages of the Family Law Bill. But several senior backbenchers privately suggested that the Bill be abandoned in the light of the unprecedented rebellion against a key plank of the Government's reforms.

Labour has Tory rebel backing for a new amendment requiring couples to consider reconciliation before they go ahead with the divorce process. In effect the amendment would add a further two months to the "cooling off" period for divorce, which will be extended from 12 months to 18 months because of Wednesday night's revolt.

Tony Blair did his best to exploit the Government's dis-

array but in angry exchanges in the Commons Mr Major accused him of being prepared to "drag" his own MPs to act against their consciences for party political purposes. The Prime Minister strongly defended his decision to allow a free vote on matters of conscience in the Bill. "I gave my word and have kept it," he said.

Mr Blair capitalised on the Government's embarrassment by claiming that the Tory revolt by four Cabinet members and more than 30 middle-ranking ministers showed "the humiliating state to which your authority has been reduced".

To Tory jeers, Mr Blair suggested the rebellion was further evidence of Tory splits and pressure within the party to move to the right. "It was fundamentally about the ethos of the Bill and fundamentally about the direction of the Conservative Party," he said.

"Doesn't it show the advanced state of decay your Government is in that you now, on this muddled-up measure, have to rely on Opposition support to carry it through the House of Commons?"

Tory rebels earlier demonstrated that there would be no let-up in their battle to "save marriage". Edward Leigh, a former minister who is leading the rebellion against the reforms, insisted that there was a gut feeling in the party in favour of traditional moral values. "The vote sent a signal that the Conservative Party is returning to its roots," he said.

Mr Leigh has tabled a similar motion to Labour's calling for a three-month process of reconciliation.

Mr Leigh also called for extra government resources for reconciliation. Legal aid, he said, should be available not only for mediation, as laid down in the Bill, but also for reconciliation. In addition judges should be allowed to take a spouse's conduct into account when determining the disposal of the couple's assets.

There were few signs yesterday that the Government was preparing to concede further ground. Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, who introduced the Bill, is understood to be sympathetic to calls for reconciliation, provided it is not mandatory. But ministers said that the measures would be expensive and the Treasury is expected to oppose them.

A spokesman from Conservative Central Office accused Mr Blair of "sheer opportunism" and senior Tories later argued that the Labour leader had committed a grave tactical error by his comments, which prompted them to rally behind the Prime Minister.

Leading article, page 21



Lord Mackay yesterday, still determined to get the Family Law Bill through

Labour scheme for the Lords 'badly flawed'

BY ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

LABOUR'S plans to reform the House of Lords are seriously flawed, according to a think-tank set up to examine the implementation of constitutional change.

The Constitution Unit says that Tony Blair's constitutional programme is too rushed and could consume virtually all the parliamentary time available for legislation in its first term.

The warning came as Derek Foster, the Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, gave details of "a radical programme of constitutional and democratic renewal" which a Labour government would introduce as a matter of urgency. He told a private conference of senior civil servants, that Labour would introduce measures including a new Governance of Britain Act, a Freedom of Information Act, a Bill of rights, reform of quangos and an end to the market testing of public services.

Mr Blair plans to end the voting rights of hereditary peers in the Second Chamber within six months of Labour gaining power.

But the Constitution Unit, which is backed by a group of pre-reform academics and politicians, notes that previous controversial constitutional Bills, including the enactment of the Maastricht Treaty and

failed attempts at Scottish devolution have taken up to 200 hours each on the floor of the Commons. In a typical session, the time available for government Bills is about 400 hours on the floor for a programme of about 60 Bills.

The unit, headed by Professor James Cornford, says that cutting the time required for constitutional bills would be fraught with controversy. It suggests instead a process of consensus-building about the role and powers of a second chamber. Mr Blair should convene a party leaders' conference to agree the broad principles if he wins the next general election.

There should be accord over whether hereditary peers are replaced with either nominated or elected members before a Bill is introduced. To counter charges that the new body would be a giant quango, the public could nominate candidates to become cross-bench peers and the parties could be represented in proportion to their votes at the last election. Alternatively the party in government would have a majority of one over the nearest opposition party.

The parties would also have to debate whether membership of the second chamber was a job or an honour, and whether it could provide a voice for the regions.

Mackay waylaid by moral majority

BY ALICE THOMSON

WHEN Lord Mackay quietly announced his "modest little" Family Law Bill last year, he had no idea what antipathy it would attract. It was months before the seemingly uncontentious piece of legislation met the wrath of the moral majority.

First a few right-wing backbenchers tried and failed to scupper it. Only when Baroness Young, the former leader of the House, turned her formidable anger on the Lord Chancellor did problems loom. Baroness Young, a Tory, linked with Labour's Baroness Hollis of Heigham to embarrass Lord Mackay into his first U-turn over pensions.

Baroness Young made it clear that no-fault divorce was anathema to well-bred, middle-aged women.

But Lord Mackay made it equally clear to peers that he

was determined to get the Bill through. He told the Lords that it was ludicrous that if you were guilty of adultery you could remarry quickly, whereas if you had just drifted apart you had to wait five years.

Lord Mackay's first mistake, according to his detractors, was ever to have allowed his name to be so strongly linked to the Bill. They caricatured him as a naive, stubborn man who had fallen among legal activists from the Law Commission and the politically correct, and was pushing through a charter for marriage without responsibilities.

His Bill might have been tampered with but so far Lord Mackay has retained his beloved no-fault principle and seems destined to continue as the longest-serving Lord Chancellor.

IN PARLIAMENT

Yesterday in the Commons: questions to Home Office ministers and the Prime Minister; private notice question on BSE; Raising (Commons and House) Bill; Lords amendments; Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill; remaining stages; backbench debate on employment consequences of the decline in electrical engineering in Gorton.

In the Lords: Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations) Bill; all stages; debate on relations with Caribbean countries.

TODAY in the Commons: the Offensive Weapons Bill; report stage; Private Members' Bill; report stage; backbench debate on priorities for change in education.

In the Lords: Road Traffic Offences (Northern Ireland) Order; Ombudsman (Northern Ireland) Order; Commissioner for Complaints (Northern Ireland) Order; Finance Bill; all stages; Trustee Investments (Division of Trust Funds) Order; Charities (Trustee Investments Act) Order.

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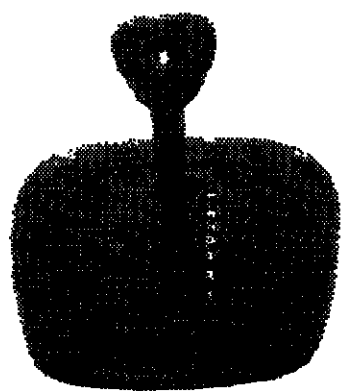
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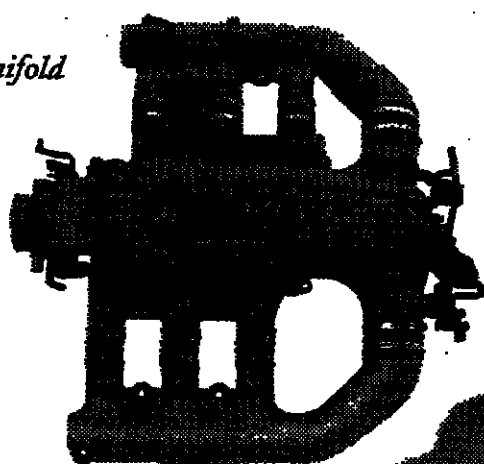
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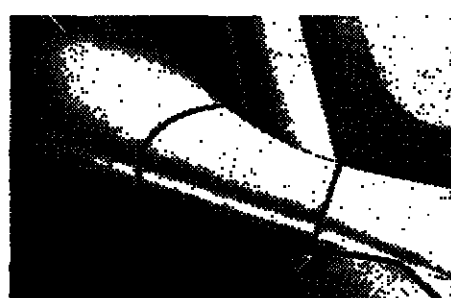
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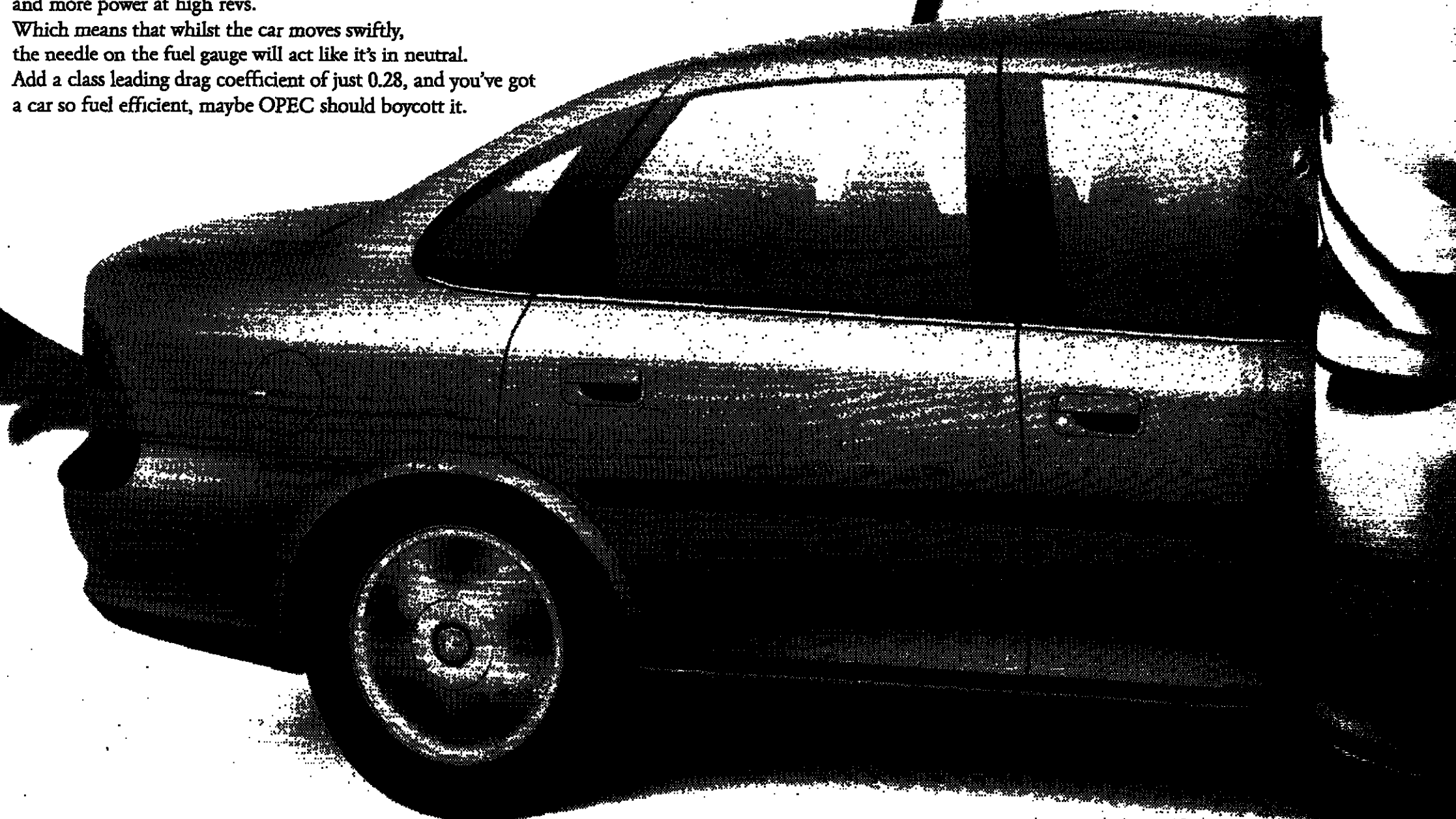
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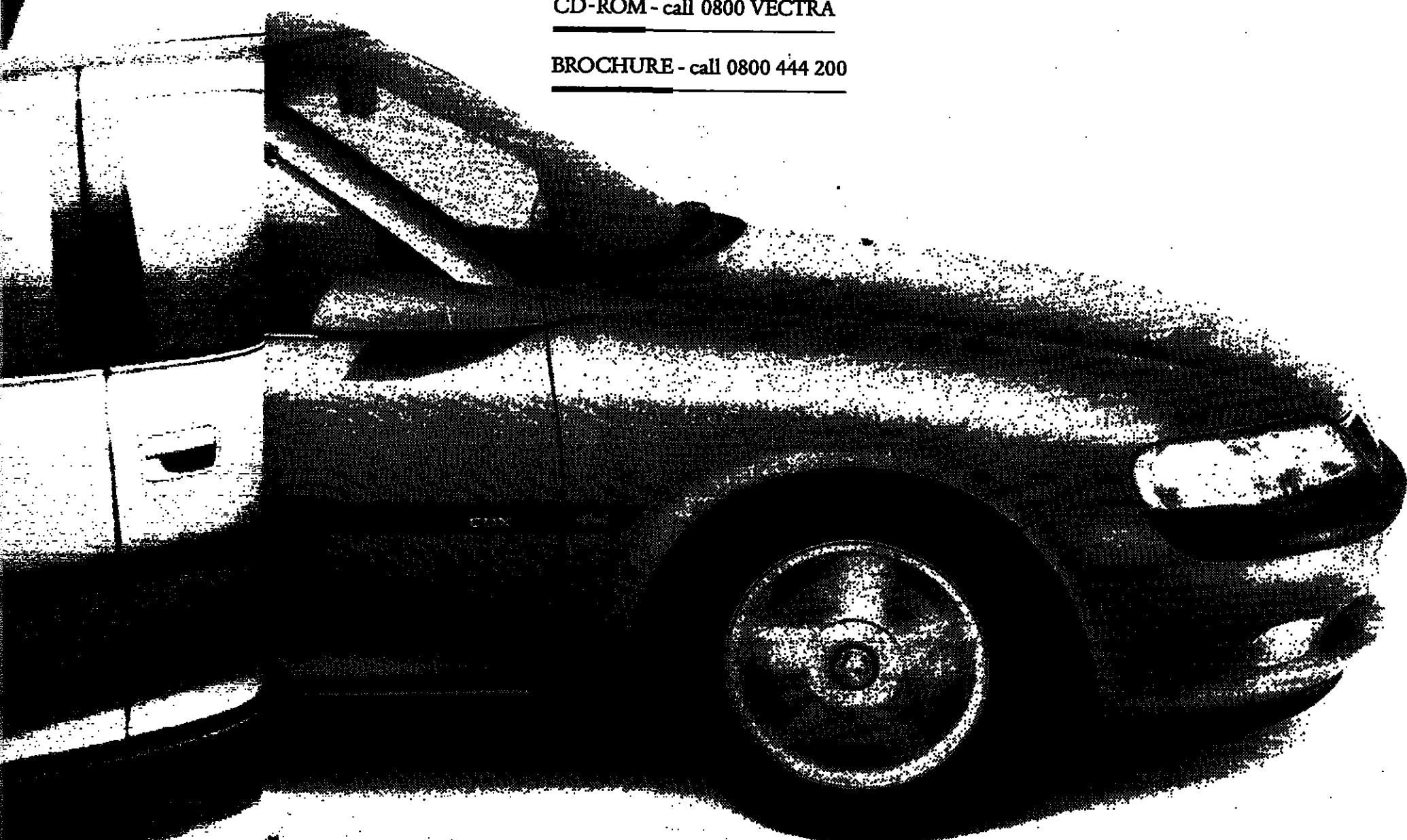


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'Security zone' is sticking point in US peace mission

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

UNDER the shadow of continued bombardments on both sides of Israel's troubled northern border, Warren Christopher's punishing shuttle peace mission was last night moving towards a critical phase. Reports said there were serious difficulties still remaining as Israel's blitz entered its fifteenth day.

As the American Secretary of State held further meetings in Damascus with President Assad, Arab sources said one of the main sticking points was the future of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

Shortly before Mr Christopher was due to hold his second session of the day with Mr Assad, Israeli military commanders reported that their jets had struck in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. The commanders said an arms dump, operated by the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, with Syrian connivance, was hit. The dump was used to

DIPLOMACY

provide vital weapons supplies to the pro-Iranian Hezbollah fighters.

The Palestinian faction, led by Ahmed Jibril, has its headquarters in Damascus and is so close to the Syrian regime that its press office arranges for foreign journalists to interview Mr Jibril.

Despite the ferocity of Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath and claims by senior Israeli officers that Hezbollah's capability had been badly hit, Katyusha rockets continued to fall on northern Israel yesterday. By nightfall, three Israeli soldiers had been lightly wounded in one explosion and a woman driver was hit in the neck by shrapnel from another rocket attack.

Earlier Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, came under strong pressure not to give any concession to end the fighting. Mr Peres, campaigning for next month's general elections, said of Mr Christo-

pher's six-day shuttle, and the single-sheet peace plan reportedly rewritten three times: "I think his efforts have produced important understandings but very serious issues remain unresolved."

American officials accompanying the Secretary of State were similarly "downbeat". "We are getting a sense from the dynamics that this is very hard," Nicholas Burns, of the State Department, said.

Before leaving for Israel, Mr Christopher, who was lampooned in the Israeli press after his humiliation at the hands of Mr Assad, who refused to see him on Tuesday, said: "These are differences that can be resolved only by the parties."

According to one official close to the negotiations, the Arabs, supported by France and Russia, are trying to use the conflict to drive Israeli troops out of its "security zone", which they police along with its mercenary South Lebanon Army (SLA).

Hezbollah has vowed to continue its attacks on Israelis as long as its forces remain in the zone, established in 1985. Israel insists that holding on to the strip of land in southern Lebanon is vital to protect its towns and villages in the Galilee from rocket attacks. A senior Israeli source said: "There is no way that we are going to abandon the SLA which has fought beside us in this operation. You have to remember that its commander is under a death sentence handed down by the Government in Beirut."

As the talks continued in Damascus last night, there was speculation that if Mr Christopher failed to secure a result in the next 48 hours, he might consider ending his marathon shuttle diplomacy. But Mr Burns said that Mr Christopher had made no decision on how long he was prepared to stay in the area if no agreement was reached soon. "The Secretary is focused on this half a day at a time," he told reporters from Washington who are travelling with the Secretary's party. "He is not setting any artificial deadlines right now."

Although Arab officials deplore the violence being inflicted on Lebanon, they believe Israel's image abroad is suffering badly as a result of television footage showing Israel's attacks on the civilian infrastructure of the country.



Yassir Arafat raises his hand in the vote to abandon a clause in the PLO charter calling for Israel's liquidation

Labour ends opposition to Palestine

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL

ISRAEL'S ruling Labour Party yesterday withdrew formal opposition to the creation of an independent Palestinian state, signalling a new turning point in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The decision followed an impassioned plea from Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister and party leader, who said peace was attainable by the turn of the century. The move came a day after the historic decision of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to strike out all references in its charter that call for the destruction of Israel.

The PLO was almost immediately rewarded for the decision when about 30,000 members of the Labour Party

met in Tel Aviv yesterday and approved a new programme by an almost unanimous show of hands.

The Labour convention, to mark the official start of the campaign for the May 29 general elections, voted for a new document. A resolution removed a clause from the Labour programme for the 1992 election which ruled out the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

A delighted Mr Peres hailed the PLO decision as the "most important ideological change of the century" for Palestinians after they had formally ended the movement's long-cherished support for an armed struggle. "It's a funda-

mental change in Israeli-Palestinian relations," he said.

Addressing his own supporters in Tel Aviv yesterday, Mr Peres said: "Our goal is to bring a comprehensive peace to the Middle East during the next four years." That will be the term of the parliament to be elected next month.

The PLO praised the Labour decision and said it was now "just a matter of time" before the Palestinians had their own state. Nabil Amr, an adviser to Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, said the move was the "first result of the flexible policy adopted by the PLO".

Despite this progress, unresolved issues still have the potential to unravel the peace process. Chief among these is the future of Jerusalem, which

both Jews and Palestinians claim as a religious and political capital.

The Labour convention asserted that Jerusalem was the eternal capital of Israel, rejecting Palestinian demands that the eastern part be the capital of a Palestinian state. Delegates also supported moves to annex parts of the West Bank, where there are Jewish settlements. This is bound to anger the PLO, which says the whole of the West Bank should be handed over to Palestinians.

□ Gaza: PLO security forces captured Adnan al-Ghoul, number two of the armed wing of Hamas, in Gaza in their pursuit of militants linked to suicide bombings in Israel. Muhammad al-Deif, the Hamas commander, remains a fugitive. (Reuters)

Iranians 'sending arms into Lebanon'

BY MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

IRAN has been sending regular shipments of arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon via Syria in the past few weeks, Western intelligence sources say.

Arms deliveries, including Katyusha launchers and rockets, mines and explosives, have been arriving at Syrian civilian and military airfields before being transported by lorry through the Lebanese Bekaa Valley. One arms shipment was delivered by this route on April 14.

HEZBOLLAH

The sources suspect some arms shipments have been disguised as humanitarian aid for Lebanon. Consignments are also believed to have been concealed in containers and delivered by ship through the Suez Canal. Turkey has served unwittingly as a hand transit point for large quantities of weapons for Hezbollah. A consignment was found accidentally at a Syrian frontier post in January.

There were reports last year that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards had been pushing for a direct air link between Tehran and Beirut to bypass Damascus. However, the Lebanese Government had banned direct flights from Tehran because of the fear of arms smuggling.

Last month, an Iranian vessel was apprehended at Antwerp in Belgium with a concealed cargo of explosives. The vessel was bound for Germany where Tehran's intelligence services are known to have a European base.

Iran continues to deny all reports that it is funding and arming Hezbollah.

Peres seeks lasers to smash rockets

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

WEAPONS

SHIMON PERES, during his visit to Washington at the weekend, is expected to ask the Clinton Administration to develop a new laser defence system to protect Israel against rockets fired from south Lebanon by Hezbollah fighters.

Israeli officials are said to be anxious to press for development of the Nautilus tactical high-energy laser, a weapons project that has languished in back rooms at the Pentagon since Washington started to pursue its ill-fated "Star Wars" programme in the 1980s.

First developed by TRW Inc, an American defence contractor, in the late 1970s, the laser weapons are now seen by the Israelis as the ideal defence against the short-range Katyusha rockets which have been fired at Israel in the past fortnight by the Iranian-backed guerrillas.

Mr Peres, who also holds the Israeli defence portfolio, will certainly discuss the missile system with William Perry,

the American Defence Secretary, and is also likely to raise the subject in meetings with President Clinton.

Two months ago, during a visit to the White Sands missile range in New Mexico, the US Army used the laser to shoot down two Katyushas captured by the Israelis. The laser, its beam caught on each missile for only seconds, melted the rockets and brought them exploding to the ground.

The Pentagon has included no money for the Nautilus in its new defence budget. However, the Israelis have said that they will inject \$20 million (£13 million) of their own funds if America is prepared to spend \$50 million for the laser project next year.

Promoters of Nautilus claim that it has clear advantages over well-tested anti-missile systems such as the Patriot. "It is like the world's biggest, hottest welding torch," said Alvin Schurr, the manager of the army laser programme at TRW.

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	£3,000+	3.00	2.40	-	-
	£10,000+	3.55	2.84	-	-
	£25,000+	3.95	3.16	-	-
Special Asset	£2,500+	3.10	2.48	3.00	2.40
	£5,000+	3.45	2.76	3.35	2.68
	£10,000+	4.40	3.52	4.25	3.40
	£20,000+	4.70	3.78	4.50	3.60
	£40,000+	5.00	4.00	4.80	3.84
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	£1+	0.25	0.20	-	-
	£100+	0.75	0.60	-	-
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	£25,000+	3.95	3.16	-	-
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	£3,000+	6.50 ⁴	-	-	-
	£5,000+	6.75 ⁴	-	-	-
	£9,000+	7.00 ⁴	-	-	-
	£3,001+	8.25 ⁴	-	-	-
Preference follow-up TESSA ³ (Including 0.50% p.a. bonus)	£5,000+	6.75 ⁴	-	-	-
	£9,000+	6.75 ⁴	-	-	-
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	£25,000+	3.50	2.80	3.35	2.68
	£50,000+	4.00	3.20	3.85	3.08
Bonuses (inc. full bonus)	£1,000+	2.65	2.12	-	-
	£10,000+	3.70	2.96	-	-
	£2,500+	3.40	2.72	3.25	2.60
Option 6 Annual	£10,000+	4.45	3.56	4.25	3.40
	£30,000+	4.75	3.80	4.55	3.64
	£5,000+	5.25	4.20	5.05	4.04
Maturity Bond	£25,000+	5.75	4.60	5.55	4.44
	£5,000+	5.25	4.20	5.05	4.04
	£25,000+	5.75	4.60	5.55	4.44
Privilege Bond	£25,000+	5.75	4.60	5.55	4.44
	£50,000+	5.85	4.68	5.65	4.52
	£100,000+	5.95	4.76	5.75	4.60
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WORLD SUMMARY

Yeltsin seals pact in China

Hong Kong: President Jiang signs his three-day visit to China today after a series of agreements and the transfer of the island to Chinese control.

Chechen leader vows revenge

MOSCOW: Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev has vowed revenge for the death of his son, and said he will continue to fight for Chechen independence.

González is rejected

MADRID: A Spanish court has rejected the extradition of Manuel Fraga Iriberry, a former minister, to face charges of involvement in the Basque separatist movement.

Hostage shot at school

NEW YORK: A 12-year-old boy was shot and killed by a police officer during a hostage situation at a school in New York.

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Bosnia hit squads 'trained by Iran to hunt war suspects'

By TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

IRANIAN-trained commando units are reported to have been sent by the Bosnian Government to kill or capture those branded war criminals by the fledgling Sarajevo state.

Four men and a woman, members of the Muslim-led Government's intelligence arm, the Bosnian Agency for Investigation and Documentation, were arrested this month near the Croatian port of Rijeka. The five Bosnians, according to *The New York Times*, were carrying grenades, assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and plastic explosives and have been accused of trying to assassinate Fikret Abdic, the renegade Muslim leader.

Sarajevo considers him a traitor because of attacks he directed against government troops, the newspaper said. The capture of the five has left Western diplomats convinced that the Bosnian Government had given its approval to attacks on those considered war criminals. The most prominent of these, Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb commander, and Radovan Karadzic, his political counterpart, are both targets of the International War Crimes Tribunal, but have remained in seclusion since the end of the war.

The Bosnian hit squads are said to have been trained by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security, which Western intelligence agencies say has carried out assassina-

tions of Iranian dissidents in Europe and the Middle East. Iranian experts are thought to have recruited the units from the Bosnian government intelligence agency and to have sent several dozen people to Tehran for instruction.

The existence of an exclusively Muslim intelligence operation within the fragile Muslim-Croat alliance not only violates the terms of the Dayton peace agreement reached in Ohio last year, but also places more pressure on the Clinton Administration.

This week, Newt Gingrich, the Republican House Speaker, launched a special investigation into President Clinton's involvement in the Administration's tacit approval as long ago as 1994 of the smuggling of Iranian arms to Bosnia. At the time, the White House assured Congress and Ameri-

ca's allies that it was adhering to the terms of a United Nations arms embargo against former Yugoslavia.

"President Clinton's policy of virtually inviting Iran into Europe could have disastrous results for America," Mr Gingrich said. "The President undertook this reckless policy hastily and then kept it secret from Congress, the American people and other European allies."

The White House said it would co-operate with the congressional investigation, although Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, questioned the cost of the investigation. "Given that there are so many committees that the Republicans have unleashed on this issue, perhaps this will synchronise some of those efforts and save the taxpayer some money," he said.

He added, of Mr Gingrich's claims: "It did not give a foothold to Iranians in Bosnia because the Iranians were already there. The Administration... is more than anxious to tell the story about how we conducted that diplomacy and what our objectives were because it led to a very positive outcome."

□ Bonn: Leaders of Bosnia's Muslim-Croat Federation agreed here yesterday to create a joint police force and set up a network of human rights monitors in a deal that they said increased the credibility of their alliance. (Reuters)



Abdic said to have been murder target



A father feeds his child yesterday in a hospital dealing with radiation-related illnesses in Minsk, Belorussia

New leaks mark Chernobyl anniversary

FROM LESIA RUDAKEVICH IN KIEV

ON THE eve of the tenth anniversary of the world's worst nuclear accident, small amounts of radiation leaked from Chernobyl's fourth reactor.

At the same nuclear power plant which exploded on April 26 1986, a careless change of filters, used to pump air inside the casing covering the crippled reactor, resulted in slight increases of radiation late on Wednesday night. But Oleg

Golosokov, a spokesman at the station, said that the matter was cleared up overnight and posed no danger.

The incident was another embarrassment for Ukraine. On Tuesday, radioactive dust and ash billowed into the sky as firefighters battled to contain three separate fires that engulfed abandoned towns, fields and forests in the exclusion zone around the plant. The most serious fire destroyed the town of Tovsty Lis, on the outskirts of the Red Forest, a line of trees directly

west of the nuclear power plant.

"There were increases in radiation in the zone due to the fires," said Andriy Sukharuchkin, deputy chief engineer at the Pripyat radiation monitoring station just outside the Chernobyl plant. "In the most serious cases, people who were fighting the fires were exposed to levels about 20 times higher than usual."

But Mr Sukharuchkin said the contamination was confined to the exclusion zone. "There shouldn't be any panic

in Kiev or anywhere else," he said.

The tenth anniversary of the disaster was also marked by the arrival of fresh humanitarian aid. The US Government flew in 80 tonnes of medicines to help Ukrainian children and other survivors.

□ Miami: No country has done more than Cuba to provide medical care for the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, according to Ukrainian officials overseeing a children's treatment centre on the island.

Peking's grand designs for colony

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

PLANS were unveiled yesterday to transform central Hong Kong after the handover to China, in a manner reminiscent of Albert Speer's design for Berlin or the Maoist brutalism of Peking's Tiananmen Square.

Raymond Wu and Nicky Chan, two of the 150 Peking-appointed members of the Preparatory Committee which is planning the government here after the transfer of sovereignty next year, and Bosco Ho, a local architect, unveiled the blueprint for the 490,000 square yard site, which will dominate central Hong Kong's harbour side.

The colony's official buildings are presently widely scattered, while Peking has a distinct government core.

Under the plan, the east side of a vast "cultural square" will be dominated by new quarters for the chief executive who succeeds Chris Patten, the Governor. It will be four times the size of Government House, where Mr Patten lives, which is to be transformed into a museum commemorating 150 years of colonial rule and the 1997 handover.

A new Legislative Council building, also four times the size of its predecessor which was built in 1901, will be erected on the north side of the square. Flanking the square will be government offices, a new City Hall, the court of final appeal, a huge cultural centre, and a garden. A long ceremonial avenue, 150 yards wide, will run northwards from the square. In the centre will rise a statue symbolising the 1997 handover.

Mr Chan said that an expert on feng shui, the traditional art of siting structures in harmony with natural surroundings, had declared that the plan "would be good for Hong Kong people".

The plan has been presented to the Hong Kong Government and to Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister, who is also the Preparatory Committee chairman.

□ Rules relaxed: Hong Kong announced yesterday an easing of rules for legal Chinese immigrants, in effect giving them right of abode from the moment of entry. (AFP)

Swiss envoy recalled in disgrace after succumbing to Balkan 'honey-trap'

By ADAM LEBOR

IT WAS a love affair that spanned the two Europes, from businesslike Berne to Balkan Bucharest. But the passion that ignited in the heat of a Romanian night ended in disgrace in the chilly corridors of the Swiss Foreign Ministry.

Jean-Pierre Vettovaglia, 49, was the Swiss Ambassador to Bucharest, glamorous, rich and influential. Floriana Jucan was a svelte 21-year-old journalist. They enjoyed fast cars, champagne and expensive

restaurants. "She was a well-known starlet among parliamentarians. She was always out with top officials," a Bucharest insider said.

But Ms Jucan was not all she seemed, according to officials in the Swiss Foreign Ministry. They believe that Mr Vettovaglia became ensnared in a "honey-trap", an operation in which women intelligence agents seduce men to extract information from them.

The Swiss Foreign Ministry brought home its ambassador, claiming that Ms Jucan was a

Romanian spy. "He was recalled because he represented a security risk, according to a report which we received from our secret services," a spokesman for the ministry said.

Both Romania's foreign and domestic intelligence services denied that Ms Jucan, who works for the popular *Evenimentul Zilei*, was one of their agents.

Ms Jucan, who also writes poetry in her spare time, now plans to write a book about the affair. "All I can say is that I am not a secret agent, and that the ambassador and

I were truly in love," she said. Mihai Gheorghe, a friend of hers, claimed that the Swiss authorities removed Mr Vettovaglia from his post because of differences with the Swiss Foreign Ministry. The ambassador "was in permanent conflict with his superiors in Switzerland and they took advantage of this love affair to discharge him."

According to the Swiss media, Mr Vettovaglia is married and has children. The Romanian press, better known for the enthusiasm

with which it pursues a story than for accuracy, has had a field day with reports combining rumour, intrigue and intricate conspiracy theories.

The satirical magazine, *Academia Catavencu*, claimed that Ms Jucan was assigned to get information from Mr Vettovaglia on treasures allegedly deposited in Switzerland by the late dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu.

Some journalists have suggested that Ms Jucan simply seduced him to get a taste of the diplomatic high-

life. Another claimed that the affair had come to light when her Swiss lover became stuck in a lift on a visit to their love-nest, and had to be rescued.

Ion Cristoiu, chief editor of *Evenimentul Zilei*, said the paper had filed a suit against the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, charging that the allegations against Ms Jucan "blackened the image of my paper". He said the paper was seeking symbolic damages of one lei. There are about 4.650 lei to the pound.

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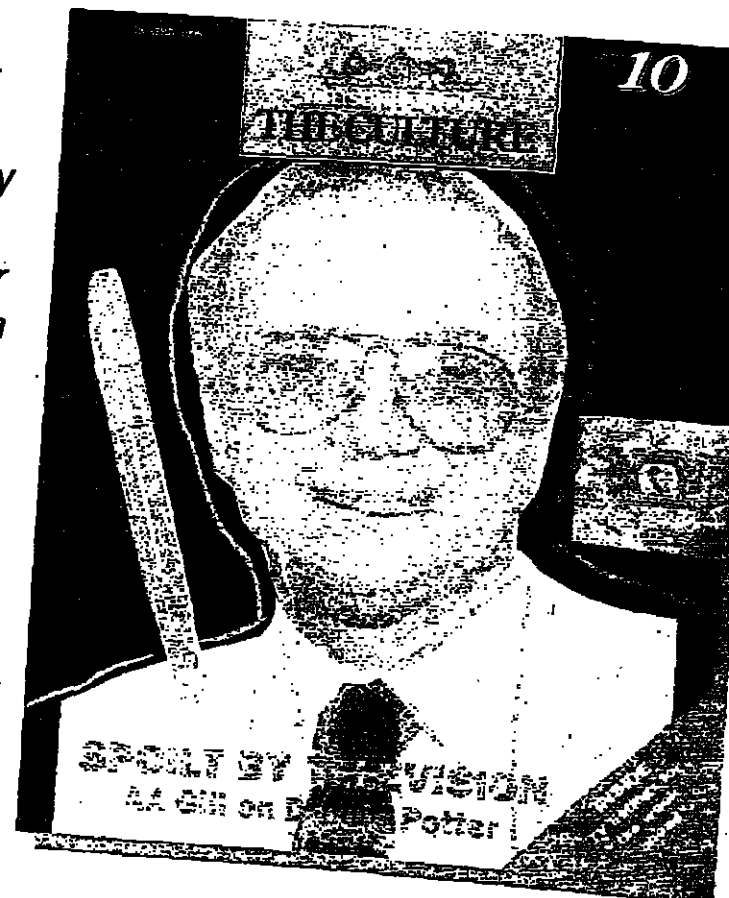
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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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"I have watched the first two episodes and can say that if it had been written by anyone with a pulse, it would never have got as far as a pre-production drink in the Groucho. Karaoke is simply dreadful..."

A A Gill on television's idolisation of Dennis Potter.
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ANC pays price for radical gestures as the rand slides

FROM R.W. JOHNSON IN JOHANNESBURG

THE collapse of the South African rand is turning into a sort of economic morality tale as the African National Congress-led Government is taught some fairly tough lessons by the money markets.

Yesterday the rand fell by nearly 5 per cent, to 6.70 rands to the pound, bringing the total fall in the currency's value in the past six weeks to more than 20 per cent and producing panicky government reactions as the consequences for inflation and business confidence become clear.

The weakness in the market began with President Mandela's announcement that he hopes to welcome President Castro of Cuba and Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, to South Africa. It was fed by rumours about President Mandela's health, and then increased with the unexpected resignation of Chris Liebenberg, the Finance Minister and a non-party banker, and his replacement by Trevor Manuel, an ANC activist with no real financial experience.

Mr Manuel appeared to take the rand's fall as a slur on his competence and, with the currency then at four rands to the dollar, vowed angrily that speculators would "lose their shirts" and poured scorn on "this ephemeral thing called the market". The market, however, was deeply unimpressed and the currency fell to 4.12 rands to the dollar.

Mr Manuel, accompanied by Mr Liebenberg, then set off to Wall Street to try to reassure

bankers and investors, but his mission was effectively undermined by the visit to Libya of Alfred Nzo, the Foreign Minister, who signed an accord supporting Libya over the Lockerbie bombing. The market reacted badly, not so much because of British and American anger over the matter, as from the larger impression of a Government that seems not to understand the international environment.



Liebenberg: resignation fed market's weakness

One American investor summed it up a few weeks ago when, at the height of a Hamas terror campaign in Israel, President Mandela said he would be happy to meet Hamas representatives. "A Government that does that sort of thing is flaky. It does not seem to know or care what international sensibilities are in either the political or economic field." By then, the currency was down to 4.25 rands to the dollar.

The trade union federation, Cosatu, then announced a general strike for next Tuesday against the employers' right to lock out strikers. Despite the fact that the ANC had agreed on this provision in constitutional negotiations, the ANC then decided to support the strike. The rand plummeted to 4.38. Yesterday, President Mandela tried to calm nerves by suggesting, mysteriously, that the strike was really about blacks achieving parity with whites and that sensible investors knew that perfectly well. The rand continued to fall, however, closing at 4.48 last night.

With the Mandela honeymoon now clearly over, commentators in South Africa have been alarmed to discover that the Government is maladministration, indecisive and that, in almost every policy area, it tends to dither and drift. Typically, policy changes are often denied a day or two after they are made and there seems to be no fixity or backbone in almost any area of government policy.

ANC officials sound bewildered by what is happening, sometimes inveighing against the market, sometimes suggesting that investors are merely racists. The harsh truth is that the world's money markets move to a different beat. Painfully slowly, the Government is learning that all its gestures towards President Castro or the Libyan leader Gaddafi, its instinctive wish to be on the side of the unions, and even its angry rhetoric, have a price.



Veteran Pat Lee with a wartime helmet bearing a tribute to fallen comrades at the Anzac Day parade in Sydney

New Australian leader acts to save flag

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

THE Australian flag is to be enshrined in law, preventing any change without the consent of the people, John Howard, the Prime Minister, said yesterday.

The newly elected leader, who made the announcement on Anzac Day, said the move would protect the national symbol from politicians and special interest groups who tried to tamper with the design. The future of the distinctive

blue flag, with its six stars and the Union Jack in the top left-hand corner, had been at the centre of debate during Paul Keating's rule. The former Labor Prime Minister initially saw a change in the flag as part of Australia's progress towards a republic. He later separated the flag issue from the republican debate, after increasing support for the design.

Mr Howard, an avowed monarchist, made it clear during the election campaign that the design would not be altered without the consent of the people.

He could not have chosen a more appropriate date to secure the future of what he called "our great national symbol". Anzac Day brought thousands on to the streets to remember those who fought and died under the flag.

An amendment to the Flag Act will mean that it will be as difficult to change the flag as it is to alter the constitution. Kim Beazley, the Labor leader, said: "It's a cross political point to make."

Photograph, page 24

Lizard of Oz bites head off snapper

FROM DAVID BENTLEY IN PORT DOUGLAS NORTH QUEENSLAND

PAUL KEATING'S style has always been distinguished by a plucky command of sport language. During his five-year reign as Australian Prime Minister, he treated many editors and adversaries to colourful terms of abuse. Clowns, barnyard bullies, stunned mules, mangy magpies, pissants, dullards, cheats, ninnies, dummies and scumbags are just a few of the jibes to fall from his lips.

In his latest brush with the media, at this chic North Queensland resort, the defeated former Labor leader - dubbed the Lizard of Oz by royalists after he broke with the press and put his arm round the Queen - flew into a fury when Ray Cash, a photographer with Brisbane's *The Courier-Mail*, snapped him disembarking from a luxury catamaran. "Low-life grub," he told Mr Cash, jabbing his chest with his forefinger.

Mr Cash had been shooting sunsets when the vessel sailed into view. When Mr Keating stepped on to the gangplank, Mr Cash quite naturally took a photograph.

Mr Keating later contacted *The Courier-Mail* demanding that his picture not be published. He must have assumed, mistakenly, that the hounds of the press were on his trail, pre-empting his carefully orchestrated exit from public life.



Imran Khan announces the launch of his Justice Movement at a Lahore press conference yesterday

Imran opens his political innings

FROM ZAHID HUSSAIN IN LAHORE

IMRAN KHAN yesterday ended months of speculation as he launched the Justice Movement (Tehreek-e-Insaf), believed to be his first step towards forming a fully fledged political party. Until recently, he had denied that he had any political ambition.

The former Pakistan cricket captain said in Lahore: "The main objective of this movement is to strive for a change in the country by demanding justice, honesty and self-respect for the people." Visibly nervous at his maiden press conference as a politician, Mr Khan made a passionate appeal to Pakistanis to join him in the fight against corruption and injustice and in the creation of an equitable social system. "I have entered into politics because when the country is moving towards disaster no one can sit on the sidelines."

Mr Khan was vague and evasive on policy relating to the status of women and on the economy. It is also not

clear who the other people are at the nucleus of the movement. In his prepared statement Mr Khan did not mention Islam, though in the past he was seen as ideologically close to some Islamic groups.

His announcement came just two weeks after a bomb destroyed part of his charitable cancer hospital. Mr Khan, 43, alleged that the blast was politically motivated.

He said yesterday that his decision to enter politics may endanger both his life and that of his wife. "But I'm not afraid of death. I have faith in God," he told the press conference.

Mr Khan said his wife was fully committed to his political struggle and would always stand by him. "But it is up to her to decide about her role in the movement," he declared.

The charismatic cricketer, popular among the urban middle classes, may provide Benazir Bhutto, the Prime Minister, with her most serious political rival to date.

Tokyo cult disciples 'killed to save souls'

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

A JAPANESE cult leader preached that murder committed at his bidding was a religious act liberating the souls of both victim and killer. A Tokyo court was told yesterday.

Shoko Asahara's teaching filled the heads of those of his disciples who carried out last year's nerve-gas attack on the city's underground, prosecutors said on the second day of a trial that has transfixed the nation. After the March 1995 attack, which killed 11 people and poisoned thousands, he praised followers who carried out the crime, welcoming them back with sweet rice cakes and juice, they added.

The prosecution statement quoted the guru as telling the disciples: "Meditate. And chant ten thousand times the phrase, 'This is good, with the blessing of the guru, the great god Shiva [the Hindu god of creation and destruction] and all the victors of truth.'"

"If the guru orders the killing of someone it means it's time for that person to die," prosecutors quoted Mr Asahara, 41, leader of Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth Sect) as saying.

In the trial's first phase, which finished yesterday, the prosecution concentrated on Mr Asahara's role as the alleged instigator of mass murder, and two other alleged offences: the killing of an Aum follower, Kotaro Ochiai, and the illegal production of a "truth serum", thiopental, and barbiturates.

The half-blind, bearded guru sat impassively as the court was told of the life-and-death power he wielded over cult members, forced to treat him as a "living incarnation of God".

He did not dirty his own hands with murder. When Ochiai incurred his wrath by trying to rescue a woman from the Doomsday sect, he ordered another disciple to eliminate him. Prosecutors described how Ochiai, a pharmacist at an Aum Shinrikyo hospital, was strangled in front of the guru in January 1994.

At first "saved" victims were dissident disciples or people opposed to the sect, but later Mr Asahara widened the teaching to justify indiscriminate slaughter. Prosecutors believe they can show that Mr Asahara, facing 17 charges, was a mass murderer who sent out lieutenants on deadly missions. He has refused to enter a plea and faces a death sentence if convicted of any of the murder charges.

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interactive

Philip Howard



■ Hail Caesar! This was the unkindest week of all

A fragment from *The Hysterical Tragedy and Lamentable Comedy of the Assassination of the Tory Party*, signed W.S., and recently authenticated by a German Shakespearean professor.

Trumpets, signature tunes of news programmes, portentous boings and pips. Enter Caesar Major and Tarzanus Senior, surrounded by a rabble of television crews, sound-booms, pollsters, spin-doctors, leader-writers, Senators and other conspirators. Caesar Major: Who is it in the press that calls on me?

I hear a tongue ruder than all Today Cry "Major!" Speak, Major is not inconsiderably inclined to hear. Oh no.

Soothsayer: Beware the Huns and Frogs. Major: What man is that?

Tarzanus: It is The Sun, and red is its hotline.

He calleth on thee to make up thy mind. An Euro for thy thoughts.

Major: He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass.

Thextreme Plebeian view still has its day. The Sun, but instead only for a day. It will be back before election time. My resolution's like the River Thames. Whose muddy current and compulsive course

Sweeps daily on from Tilbury to Teddington But then ebbs back again — twice daily. Those bastards live in cloud-cuckoo-terra If they imagine we can still survive As Little England on Europa's skirts. They are a tassel short of a full toga. A cohort short of a legion. On rather hand If our confederate allies in the EU, "That bloody bunch of shits" in Caesar's words.

Refuse to take our beef, I'll do such things. What they are yet I know not, — but they shall be

The terrors of the European Court. Rubens Lignum. A Conspirator: Now, gods, stand up for bastards.

Major: And who on earth is that? Tarzanus: Mark him well, Major. He would have thy crown.

He is the Redwood and he loves thee not. Nor Europe neither, so far as one can tell. Major: Let me have men about me that wear specs.

Blear-eyed men and such as blink and squint. Yond' Redwood has a pop-eyed, fanatic glare.

He plots too much: such men are dangerous. Eques Aurifex, a Sestertius billionaire from Gaul and Mexico and a friend of Trimalchior: Hail Caesar! Referendum nobis omnia. Non tibi gloria: nil nisi referendum. Never mind the question. On with the suffrages.

Vote early and vote often and vote Non. Vivat Steve Forbes! Vivat ille Ross Perot! Vivant all mercenaries turned politicians! Who know which side solid bread is margined on.

Caesar, your Senate's record in negotiis With Europe is not strength but feebleness. You have slipped down the primrose path Towards the abhorrent bonfire of Brussels. Major: Veni, Vidi, Weedy. Not indecisively. O Aurifex, I do not rule out a referendum. But I would not rule it in either.

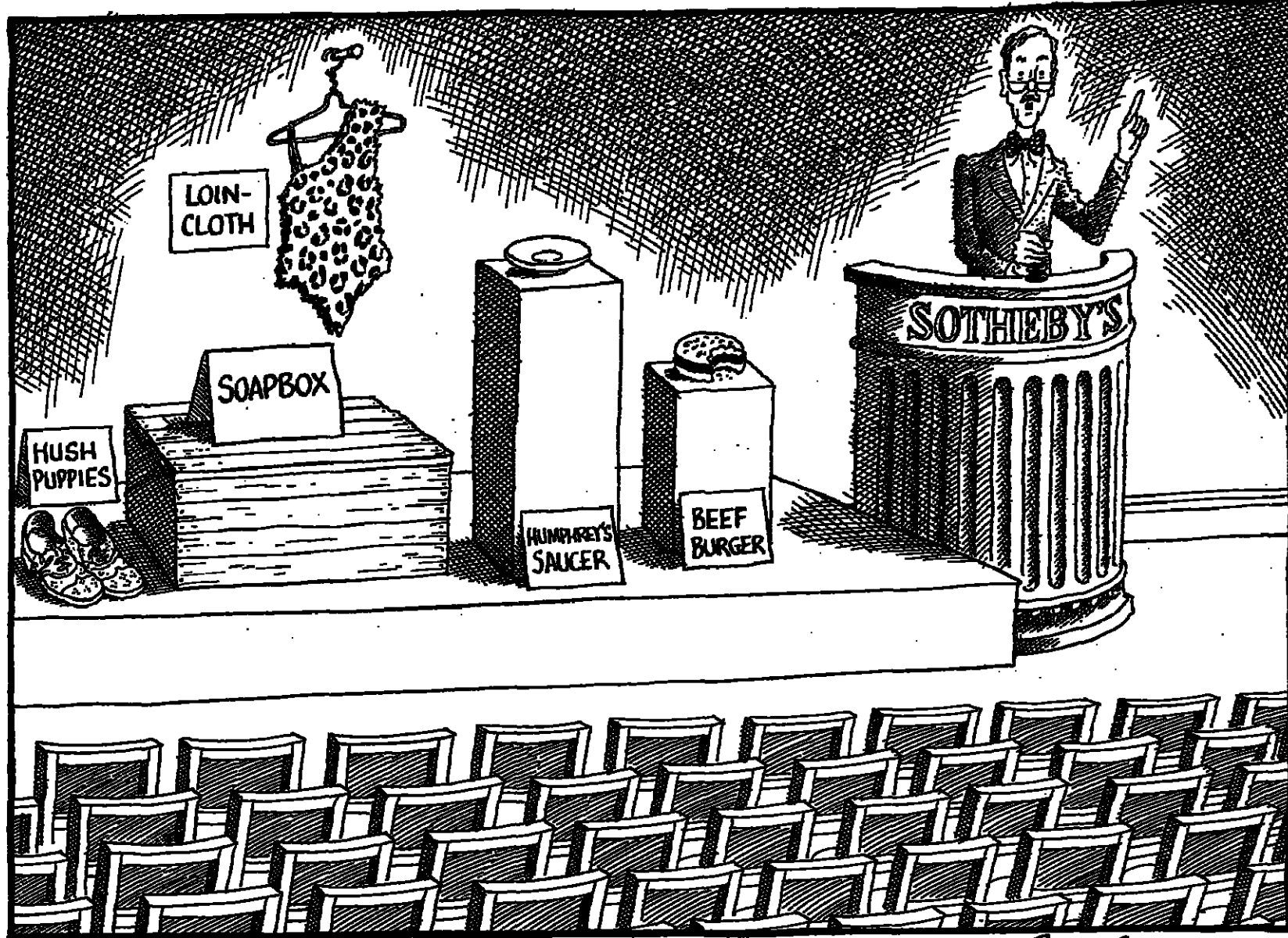
For I have made our locus crystal clear. The Senate's decision on the referendum. Whether to rule it in or rule it out. Or neither, as events may sometimes intervene.

Will be taken at such a time and place Which hath yet to be ruled in or out. Oh yes. These are Caesar's no-nonsense words.

Those who deliberately misunderstand them Incur great Caesar's wrath. At the very least, I shall be not inconsiderably vexed. Aurifex (aside to Redwood): Translate, precor.

I am a simple patriot from overseas. And do not understand your tongue of Question Time. He doth bestride our narrow world like Mr Bean.

But I observe your Senators Of all parties, persuasions, races, ages, sex, Europhobes, Eurobears and EuroSepsics. Are the ugliest bunch that I have ever seen — including journalists. Be constant, Rubens. And I may win you Caesar's laurel crown.



Odd volumes of stuff

A catalogue of literary curiosities evokes forgotten ventures into the unknown

I have never been a collector of books just for their covers and their dates of publication, much less for their bindings. As far as I am concerned, a book is something to read, and nothing else. Of course, I can and do admire a beautiful book as an object, as I would a picture or a jewel: I have had copies of my own 15 books beautifully bound, and I am not above running my fingertips over the lovely leather (tactile pleasures are just as worthy as the others). Moreover, I am a lifelong book sniffer — many an odd book I have had from many a bookseller.

But all of a sudden there came through my letter-box a booklet, hand-somely put together, its beautiful pages hungry for snuffing, carefully illustrated, and a pleasure to handle. This, I realised, was a bookseller's catalogue, but it was in the category of rare books — and rare they must be, when some of them are priced in thousands, and indeed one would set you back no less than £28,000 (credit cards not accepted).

But most remarkable that I am not looking at these books for their contents. Or that was what I thought as I flipped the pages, but in only a few moments I found myself steeped in the most fascinating and *recherché* matter, from which I could hardly extricate myself, and did not want to.

The very first item that caught my eye — and well it might — was labelled plainly "Lunacy", and the title reads: *Observations on the Nature, Kinds, Causes and Preventions of Insanity, Lunacy or Madness*. I assumed that it was some crude and meaningless item — the date was 1782 — and the author, Thomas Arnold, meant nothing to me. But then I looked at the bookseller's commentary.

One of the seminal works in the history of psychiatry, Arnold ran a private madhouse in Leicester, and from 1794 was head of the Leicester Lunatic Asylum. He made two main divisions: "...hallucinations and delusions insanity, with numerous subdivisions supported by case histories gathered from the literature and his own practice, some of which read like descriptions in modern textbooks...

Now who would think that such treasure trove was lurking in the calm recesses of Mr J.F.T. Rodgers' "100 Rare Books on 100 Different Subjects"? Not I. Nor did I think that I would have found myself in the middle of an argument between a leading astronomer and Voltaire, and even if I had, I

would not have imagined that Mr Rodgers would sign off so coolly — referring to the astronomer — with "He was executed in 1793".

What about Edward Barlow with his *Meteorological Essays, Concerning the Origin of Springs, Generation of Rain, and Production of Wind. With a Rational and Historical Account of the Causes and Course of the Tide: Its propagation thro' the Great Ocean?* Charming, you would say, and so it is. But Mr Rodgers is so profligate with his knowledge that when he has finished with the wind and the rain, he tells us that Barlow "...had earlier achieved some fame as the inventor of repeating clocks and watches".

Then there was a Casanova — not the one we know about, but the one who founded a new school of writing which was dominant for 150 years. That in itself may seem uninteresting, but Casanova II changed entirely the style of legal documents, so that it was based on simplicity. (What I want to know is who changed it all back again?)

But some things don't change at all. In 1737 we could read an edict that ran: *Abstracts of Several Laws and Rules That are now in Force, relating to the Importation of Wines into and out of Great Britain*.

What astonished me most in my peeps into the past is the extraordinary number of ventures into the unknown. A German landed on Greenland in 1746 (and made fine engravings of birds of prey, whales, narwhals, as well as kayaks). From Hamburg to Iceland is not a great distance, nor, presumably, did Johann Anderson think it was when he landed. But what about those truly intrepid voyagers who went in the 17th century, too, and what befell them?

What befell them was that they were captured and in time ransomed, but not before the sharp-eyed Emanuel d'Aranda had made copious notes. Of all 17th-century travellers, Aranda is without doubt the one who had with least sophistication depicted the misery of

slavery in Algeria... one of the most interesting and dramatic voyages of the 17th century.

But the next figure to leave a presumably comfortable home (in Mannheim) must have had a special pull, and indeed he had. He was a Jesuit, and his call took him to California, of all places. He lived for 16 years in the Mission, and left only when the Jesuits were driven out. Our bookman says: "Like most of the German Jesuits he found conditions in the Missions insufferable, and his book amply expresses this disenchantment." I am beginning to think that our splendid Mr Rodgers is a cynic.

But he must be cynical about the next item, because it is almost certainly a fake. That is, the travels that are recounted are probably fraudulent, but as a story — and a story in 1670 — they can certainly delight in the Münchhausen-like boasting, and the boasting is certainly powerful:

The Late Travels of S. Giacomo Barati An Italian Gentleman, Into the remote Countries of The Abassins, or Ethiopia Interior... An exact account of the Laws, Governments, Religion... With many Observations which some may improve to the advantage and increase of Trade with them... Together with a Confirmation of this Relation drawn from the Writings of Damianus de Goes, and Jo. Scalliger, who agree with the Author in many particulars.

But there can be no mistake with the next story. First, it emphasises the extraordinary wanderlust that has over the centuries dragged so many men from their beds, to seek — to seek what? Not necessarily gold, and in the case of Captain Philip Beaver, certainly not. His title-page reads like this:

African Memoranda: relative to an attempt to establish a British Settlement on the Island of Buluna, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the year 1792, with a brief notice of the Neighbouring Tribes, Soil, Productions, and some observations on the Facility of Colonizing that part of Africa, with a view to Cultivation; and the Introduction of Letters and Religion to its

Inhabitants: but more particularly as the means of gradually abolishing African Slavery.

In 1792? Yes indeed, if you have a captain like Beaver. For he said that the slave trade could be curtailed, if not ended, by the growing of sugar cane. To prove it, he bought the island from its king — King Nibana of Ghinalla — and got started. (Our intrepid explorer paid for the island with a variety of goods, including an 18-gallon cask of brandy, five handkerchiefs and six hats.)

Nor did the voyagers stop there. William Bruzon sailed to Bengal (or Bengalia as it was then called) in 1638, and the first thing he did was to describe the indigenous and their customs. "Also their detestable Religion, mad and fopish rites and Ceremonies, and wicked Sacrifices and impious Customs used in those parts." He too bartered successfully, this time for trading concessions, for which he paid "Twenty pounds of Cloves, Twenty pounds of Mace, Twenty pounds of Nutmegs, two bolts of Damask, one faire Looking-Glasse, one Foulting-piece, with two Locks, and one double Pistol". (Ah, but that "faire Looking-Glasse"?)

I was on the verge of asking "But where were the pirates that these intrepid voyagers had to deal with?" when I turned the page and remembered that in those days the line between pirates and voyagers — and there were some famous names on the list — was very thin. What about this?

Buccaniers of America: Or, a true Account of the Most Assaults committed of late years upon the Coast of The West Indies, by the Buccaniers of Jamaica and Tortuga... both English and French

And all of a sudden there comes a new Dictionary — but not a dictionary such as the OED. This one goes like this:

A New Dictionary of the Terms Ancient and Modern of the Canting Crew, in its several Tribes, of Cypriotes, Beggars, Thieves, Cheats, Useful for all sorts of People (especially Foreigners) to secure their Money and preserve their Lives, besides very Diverting and Entertaining being wholly New.

But I think we should finish as we started — that is to say, among the curiosities of the world, and particularly Mr Rodgers' generous supply of those curiosities, with this:

The Book of Feet. A History of Boots and Shoes, also Hints to Last Makers and Remedies for Corns. Yours for £180.

Bernard Levin

Red routed

NEW LABOUR has finally got rid of Edward "Red Ted" Knight, the former leader of Lambeth council who put the loony into Labour's loony left. He has been ousted from the town hall where he once ruled the roost.

Until last week, he was still managing the Lambeth Social Club, a meeting place for trade unions and council staff in the town hall basement. But ten years after he was barred from office for refusing to set a rate in protest at cuts, the council's new Labour and Liberal Democrat coalition last week took the club to court and evicted it from the building.

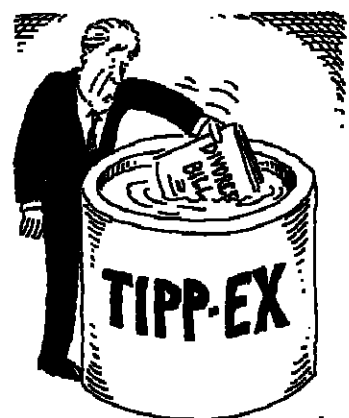
"We had a review of the use of buildings and the club refused to pay any rent," explained the council. "so we went to court." One new Labour councillor added: "It's about cleansing the stables. We are clearing out the old hard left."

The club's most hallowed corner was the "Red Room", decorated with a piece of the Red Flag that once flew from the town hall roof. "If they think I'm a political threat after ten years, they must be in trouble," says Ted. "I cannot think they would close down a whole social club of 1,700 members just to have a go at me."

● An edict has been issued by disciplinarians at Christ Church, Oxford, the college which has produced more Prime Ministers than any other. Owing to "unusual levels" of drunkenness, junior members have been asked to restrict themselves to just two glasses of wine at supper. Senior members drinking is unaffected.

Tentative steps

TO THE Middle Eastern mixing pot of Israelis, Syrians and Kai-



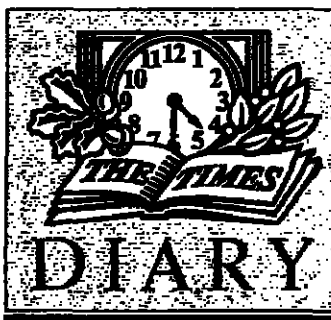
yusha missiles add another fiery ingredient: Miss Lorne Williamson, director of the M&G Trenowath Marquee Company of Cambridge. For years, Miss Williamson's firm has hired out a tent to the Israeli Embassy in London for its Independence Day. This year, however, she was so disgusted by Israel's bombing of Lebanon that she decided it was time to pull out the tent pegs.

"The images of the bombing of the United Nations compound and the displacement of so many Lebanese civilians cannot be ignored," thunders Miss Williamson in her letter to the Israeli Ambassador, Moshe Raviv. "I return deposit cheque," reads a snooty PS. The Embassy was left with just two working days to find marquee II. Peace or no peace, it seems unlikely Miss Williamson's services will be called upon next year.

Unaided

THE HOUSE of Lords has been hit by political correctness. A busy baroness recently put in a request to the Sergeant at Arms for a safety-pin to attach her House of Lords pass. The angle of her ample embonpoint made for difficulties with the usual chain-round-the-neck method.

To her astonishment, the request met with a frosty response.



The relevant memo from the Sergeant at Arms's office to Black Rod, General Sir Edward Jones, has fallen into my hands: "You may like to mention to the Peeress that under Health and Safety at Work Regulations, pins, needles etc. are no longer being issued to places of work because of the risk of transferring the AIDS virus." The pins were grudgingly supplied, however, and the baroness proudly sports her pass as never before.

Final score

THE TENSION mounts as we wait to see if Geoff Hurst will be reunited with the football with which he scored a hat-trick in the 1966 World Cup final. But I have news of another football icon. A campaign has been launched to provide a fitting tribute

to Pickles, the dog that found the World Cup itself after it was swiped in 1966.

The campaign has powerful backers, including Sepp Blatter, general secretary of Fifa, according to *Total Football* magazine, which wants a gold bust of the hound installed at Wembley. The Labour MP Tony Banks, who yesterday in the Commons demanded a debate on the lost football, is more ambitious. "We should rename the World Cup the Pickles World Cup — perhaps sponsored by Branston."

● Richard Branson went roller-blading in Central Park this week before launching his Virgin store. It was a mistake — he lost control at speed and fell in a knot-head after plunging through some formal flowerbeds. "You've savaged the John Lennon Memorial Garden," cried dog-walkers as the bearded wonder struggled to his feet.

Loose ends

FIRST the Princess of Wales is shown to have cellulite; now I have grave news of Cindy Crawford. One of the world's most beautiful women, she looked magnificent at a West End party on Wednesday, but she could do with some hair conditioner — she



Cindy: catty colleagues

has quite a curtain of split-ends. Purring with satisfaction at the discovery on Wednesday night, when Cindy turned out to launch a West End fashion boutique, her catwalk colleagues spread the news. The supermodel ignored the gossip and praised the Princess of Wales. "She hasn't got cellulite. It's a vicious rumour," she said. "In fact, she looks fantastic and I could take some advice from her."

P.H.S

Three ages of marriage

Paul Barker on the dire effects of divorce on children

A bigall's party is over. Alison Steadman and Mike Leigh have decided to split up. "We have two wonderful sons we care for, we care for each other and we do intend to work together," she told the press on the Imperial War Museum set of her forthcoming BBC TV series about the Second World War. You might have thought that such a statement would end, appropriately, with the words "...and we intend to soldier on with our marriage". But no.

To many people Alison Steadman, from her roles in her husband's films, epitomises the slightly dotty but devoted wife and mother, who smiles and carries on, even if (as in *Life is Sweet*) she finds that her husband only wants to run a part-time hamburger stall, and that, of her two daughters, one is interested only in being a female plumber and the other in making love while smeared all over with chocolate. Now she joins the divorce squadron, along with the Duke and Duchess of York, Will and Julia Carling, and all the other recent high-profile refugees from love and marriage.

There were mixed motives behind Tory MPs' rebellion against the Lord Chancellor's Family Law Bill this week. (A free vote was a heaven-sent chance to put a warning whoopee-cushion under the Prime Minister.) But a genuine anxiety about what is happening to the family was one of them. The anxieties are well-founded. Britain is the divorce capital of Western Europe.

The Government regularly chirrups that we have become the EU's enterprise centre, its Singapore or Taiwan. We have also become its Reno. Young children are increasingly caught up in the marital bust-ups. In 1995, according to *Social Trends*, 55,000 children under the age of five saw, heard and — most important — felt their parents' divorce. The figures are up by a quarter in ten years. Couples' lack their marriages in ever earlier, children or no children.

Yet all the evidence shows that children would prefer their parents to stay together, even if they are throwing the kitchenware at each other, or going away overnight for mysterious business meetings. The Joseph Rowntree Research Foundation in York has published a series of studies which all show that family disruption is bad for children. They are "more likely to suffer health, educational and social problems", to quote from one of these. Admittedly, marital conflict is not good for children either. But marriage break-up is worse. The children describe themselves afterwards as "often unhappy" or "miserable". They find it hard to make friends. They imagine there is something wrong with them.

We seem to have become so passionate about divorce that the opposing evidence is often ignored. It is especially ignored by those who, in a twisted version of feminism, still maintain that lone-parents are fine and dandy for the children, perhaps even superior to two parents.

On Monday, the Rowntree Foundation published its latest study. It kept track of a thousand young people. One of the main findings was that boys and girls who are still living with both "biological parents" at the age of 15 are the least likely to start using drugs or to become unemployed. The girls are also least likely to become teenage mothers.

The *Daily Mail* put these findings on page one, with the headline "Confirmed Divorce Damages Children". The *Guardian* tucked them away on page seven, under the headline "Standard Family No Key to Success". I have to report that the *Mail* was more accurate than the *Guardian*. Don't look now, your preconceptions are showing.

Of course, the way we live, and especially the way women live, has shifted enormously. But this does not mean that child-rearing has to suffer. Dr Catherine Hakim, of the London School of Economics, has enraged some of her fellow sociologists by pointing this out in a taboo-breaking new book, *Key Issues in Women's Work* (Athlone, £35/14.95). As she says, all of the net increase in employment in Britain in the past half-century has come from female part-time work. (By contrast, in the 1980s alone, two million full-time male jobs were lost.) But this still leaves women with a wide choice about how to arrange their, and their children's, lives.

Historically, we have gone through two phases of marriage. It is time to start on a third. For centuries marriage was, at bottom, an economic arrangement, organised largely for the benefit of the man. Would this woman (depending on your social level) wield a swift sickle, keep a close eye on the till or breed the necessary male heir for the estates? In the 20th century this model was overtaken in Western societies by the ideal of emotional partnership. The new holy trinity were Sigmund Freud, Alfred Kinsey and Simone de Beauvoir. Many parents began to feel that their own demands, their own gratifications, were as important as the children's. And as many a divorce case shows, some of them began to behave like infants themselves.

But it becomes more and more obvious that what matters most in a marriage is what it does for the next generation. To borrow from the sociologists, the essential third phase is to see marriage as a nest. Nothing matters as much as the children.

The author is a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Community Studies.

Three ages of marriage

Paul Barker on
the dire effects of
divorce on children

A

As John Major and Tony Blair squared up to each other across the dispatch box yesterday, their row must have sounded familiar to any couple at war. There was irrationality, acrimony and misrepresentation in equal measures: all the unhappy ingredients, in fact, of the typical domestic argument that afflicts couples in the run-up to a divorce.

The irony may have been lost on the politicians. But to the general public, this must seem a rum affair. Four Cabinet ministers vote against a government Bill introduced by one of their most senior colleagues. The Government is defeated on one crucial amendment (though it wins the other). The Bill's second reading is secured only with opposition support: 165 Tories backed the rebel amendment. Does not this show, as the Leader of the Opposition claimed yesterday, that the Government is "in an advanced state of decay" and does it not show "the humiliating state to which [Mr Major's] authority has been reduced"?

Up to a point, Mr Blair. Ever since this Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech last autumn, the Prime Minister has made it clear that it would be subject to a free vote. Divorce is not a party political issue; it is a matter for personal conscience. Everybody has always known that the main hurdle for the legislation lay on the Tory side and that opposition support would be critical to its passage. The mistake that ministers made in the heated atmosphere of politics this week was not to prepare better for Wednesday night's result.

Although the scale of the rebellion was larger than expected, the result could have been worse for Lord Mackay of Clashfern. Had the Tory rebels managed to reintroduce the notion of fault into divorce, the whole principle of the Bill would have been undermined. Instead they merely extended

from one year to 18 months the time necessary for a divorce to be won in cases where there are children under 16 or when one spouse applies for an extension. This is a sensible measure, giving notice to couples with children that divorce for them is a more serious matter. It does not in any way conflict with the central reform.

What the vote has done, though, is to expose the extent of the manoeuvring for position that is going on inside the Tory party. Can the rebellions of Stephen Dorrell and William Hague, both possible leadership contenders, have had anything to do with their wish to reassure the Right that they are "sound" on social issues? If John Major's position had been stronger, it has to be wondered whether the support for the amendments would have been quite so large.

Nonetheless, Mr Blair's treatment of the result yesterday was shamelessly misleading. He knows perfectly well that conscience votes — whether on a government or a Private Member's Bill — are matters for individual judgment. He did not make political capital out of differing Conservative votes on the proper age for homosexual consent or the time at which a foetus could be aborted.

If Mr Blair proves himself as unprincipled when it comes to the Bill's third reading, he will deserve to be criticised again. Labour has served notice that its support cannot be taken for granted; and it may well try to find an excuse to defeat the Government in the summer. Given that virtually every Labour MP supports the principles of this Bill, a decent defence of such action would be tough. If Labour MPs really care about the family and about their constituents, they must not let the prospect of a cheap political victory obscure the long-term importance of sorting out Britain's messy divorce procedures.

Sir, With reference to the Prime Minister's speech to the Institute of Directors, contrary to his assurances when the Maastricht treaty was rammed through Parliament, it is obvious that things are not going our way in Europe. On the Continent there is an implacable determination to integrate further.

Does Mr Major believe that we should stay in the European Union at any cost to our independence? What should we do if a Europe of sovereign nation states is no longer on offer?

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES WIDE,
Church Cottage,
Main Street, Clapham,
Northamptonshire,
April 25.



PUNCH AND JUDY

Blair landed a blow on divorce, but the attack was unjust

As John Major and Tony Blair squared up to each other across the dispatch box yesterday, their row must have sounded familiar to any couple at war. There was irrationality, acrimony and misrepresentation in equal measures: all the unhappy ingredients, in fact, of the typical domestic argument that afflicts couples in the run-up to a divorce.

The irony may have been lost on the politicians. But to the general public, this must seem a rum affair. Four Cabinet ministers vote against a government Bill introduced by one of their most senior colleagues. The Government is defeated on one crucial amendment (though it wins the other). The Bill's second reading is secured only with opposition support: 165 Tories backed the rebel amendment. Does not this show, as the Leader of the Opposition claimed yesterday, that the Government is "in an advanced state of decay" and does it not show "the humiliating state to which [Mr Major's] authority has been reduced"?

Up to a point, Mr Blair. Ever since this Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech last autumn, the Prime Minister has made it clear that it would be subject to a free vote. Divorce is not a party political issue; it is a matter for personal conscience. Everybody has always known that the main hurdle for the legislation lay on the Tory side and that opposition support would be critical to its passage. The mistake that ministers made in the heated atmosphere of politics this week was not to prepare better for Wednesday night's result.

Although the scale of the rebellion was larger than expected, the result could have been worse for Lord Mackay of Clashfern. Had the Tory rebels managed to reintroduce the notion of fault into divorce, the whole principle of the Bill would have been undermined. Instead they merely extended

from one year to 18 months the time necessary for a divorce to be won in cases where there are children under 16 or when one spouse applies for an extension. This is a sensible measure, giving notice to couples with children that divorce for them is a more serious matter. It does not in any way conflict with the central reform.

What the vote has done, though, is to expose the extent of the manoeuvring for position that is going on inside the Tory party. Can the rebellions of Stephen Dorrell and William Hague, both possible leadership contenders, have had anything to do with their wish to reassure the Right that they are "sound" on social issues? If John Major's position had been stronger, it has to be wondered whether the support for the amendments would have been quite so large.

Nonetheless, Mr Blair's treatment of the result yesterday was shamelessly misleading. He knows perfectly well that conscience votes — whether on a government or a Private Member's Bill — are matters for individual judgment. He did not make political capital out of differing Conservative votes on the proper age for homosexual consent or the time at which a foetus could be aborted.

If Mr Blair proves himself as unprincipled when it comes to the Bill's third reading, he will deserve to be criticised again. Labour has served notice that its support cannot be taken for granted; and it may well try to find an excuse to defeat the Government in the summer. Given that virtually every Labour MP supports the principles of this Bill, a decent defence of such action would be tough. If Labour MPs really care about the family and about their constituents, they must not let the prospect of a cheap political victory obscure the long-term importance of sorting out Britain's messy divorce procedures.

Sir, With reference to the Prime Minister's speech to the Institute of Directors, contrary to his assurances when the Maastricht treaty was rammed through Parliament, it is obvious that things are not going our way in Europe. On the Continent there is an implacable determination to integrate further.

Does Mr Major believe that we should stay in the European Union at any cost to our independence? What should we do if a Europe of sovereign nation states is no longer on offer?

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES WIDE,
Church Cottage,
Main Street, Clapham,
Northamptonshire,
April 25.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Challenging views on UK in Europe

From Mr Roy Whitney, MP for Wycombe (Conservative), and others

Sir, Your description (leading article, April 25) of the Prime Minister's remarks on Europe to the Institute of Directors as a "precarious straddle between opposing positions" is ungenerous.

His speech (report, April 25) was a robust restatement of a set of views which are coherent and consistent. He affirmed our role in the European Union and his determination that it should be a union of nation states — an objective shared by other European leaders. As Chancellor Kohl regularly says, no one wants a centralised superstate. It does not and never will exist.

John Major yesterday threw down the gauntlet to those who believe we should leave the Union or that Britain's interests could be protected by some sort of trading relationship with the rest of Europe. He spelt out clearly the economic, political and strategic benefits of our membership, all of which would be put in jeopardy should we heed the demands of the Euro-sceptics.

At a time when the European debate has descended into unreality, often verging on hysteria, and he himself is under so much pressure, the Prime Minister has once again shown his good sense and steadfastness.

Sincerely,
RAY WHITNEY,
QUENTIN DAVIES,
TRISTAN GAREL-JONES,
JOHN HANNAM,
TIM RENTON,
ANDREW ROWE,
House of Commons,
April 25.

From Mr Charles Wide, QC

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CHARLES WIDE,
Church Cottage,
Main Street, Clapham,
Northamptonshire,
April 25.

From Mr Neil A. Spiers

Sir, Mrs Elisabeth Sandys (letter, April 23) seems a little misinformed about Sir James Goldsmith and his Referendum Organisation.

If she wishes to support a political party whose aim is the "pursuit of restoring our traditional democratic and sovereign rights" as she indicates, then she should support the UK Independence Party and not Sir James Goldsmith who, whilst appealing to the anti-EU lobby with his party, is in favour of remaining in the European Union.

Yours sincerely,
NEIL A. SPIERS,
37 Tynham Road,
Maidenhead, Berkshire,
April 25.

From Mr D. J. Tapper

Sir, The real attraction offered by the Referendum Party of Sir James Goldsmith is that it provides a democratic option that did not previously exist in British politics.

I do not profess to understand the minutiae of the Treaty of Rome or of Maastricht but I do know that I dislike the way in which what was the EEC is developing and the loss of sovereignty that is appearing on the horizon.

Prior to Sir James's intervention I considered myself to be disfranchised. Thanks to the Referendum Party I can now express my fears through the ballot box. If this concerns any of the major parties then I am delighted.

Yours faithfully,
D. J. TAPPER,
5 Hilbury Gardens,
Warrington, Surrey,
April 25.

From Mr P. V. Radford

Sir, Is it not time that we looked at some of the advantages of our membership of the EU?

Can anyone seriously suggest that the export of British beef would not have been banned or that the measures we are being forced to implement would have been any easier to negotiate if we had been outside the EU?

And perhaps one of the more vociferous Euro-sceptics might like to explain who would be sharing the cost with us.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK RADFORD,
Langford Hall,
Newark, Nottinghamshire,
April 25.

Business letters, page 29

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Blake case impact on official secrecy

From Mr Hugh Mooney

Sir, Three cheers (once again) for Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor of the Chancery Division, in throwing out the Government's transparent attempt to increase official secrecy by the back door in its vengeful action to confiscate the profits of the traitor George Blake's autobiography, *No Other Choice* (report, April 20; Law Report, April 23).

As gatekeeper of government secrets the Attorney-General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, claimed that Blake owed a lifelong duty to keep his mouth shut about his work in British intelligence. That was going too far, said Sir Richard, knowing that the duty did not apply only to traitors like Blake but to thousands of loyal citizens, including Cabinet ministers, generals and ambassadors, who might be induced not to write their memoirs.

British political experience is impoverished by this doctrine of official secrecy, which prevents many public servants from giving their first-hand accounts of their experiences. We are left to read the much weeded files 30 years on, if we are lucky.

One consequence is that the rare whistleblowers, the media conspiracy correspondents and their anonymous sources, are often the first and only source of information on the secret world. Because it is a secret world, the authorities can neither confirm nor deny their stories. Secrecy about the truth actually helps perpetuate myths about intelligence and government. One example is the so-called plot by M15 to overthrow Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1974.

It is, however, naive to expect any great change in the culture. As a former member of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Information Research Department I was recently sent a copy of the official early history of this secret department, but it signalled no move towards more openness.

I was reminded that I was still bound by the declaration on the Official Secrets Act made when I had joined the department. When I protested that the section had been repealed it

was acknowledged that I was not bound by it. When I asked for guidance on my obligations under the revised Official Secrets Acts I was advised to consult a solicitor.

What government departments want is a legal right to take action against anyone who publishes anything containing official information without prior authority.

Serving and retired public servants have been told for years that they have a legal duty to present a manuscript for clearance before offering it to a publisher. Sir Richard has ruled that there is no legal basis for these gagging demands unless the public servant has previously made a binding agreement to keep his mouth shut.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH MOONEY,
(Member, FCO, Information Research Department, 1969-77),
1 Anchor Cottage,
Prickwillow Road,
Isleham, Cambridgeshire,
April 23.

From Professor Emeritus Charles Chadwick

Sir, If, as your report of April 19 states, "under the law no criminal is allowed to profit from his crime while serving his sentence", that point seems to have been ignored, or interpreted in a very narrow sense.

Blake, having escaped after six years in prison, may not be actually serving his sentence, but the serving of that sentence has yet to be completed. If the Scott decision stands, does it not mean that any escaped prisoner can profit from his crime for as long as he can avoid recapture?

The solution would seem to be to ensure that "no criminal is allowed to profit from his crime until he has served his sentence". Whether he should be allowed to do so even then is another matter.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES CHADWICK,
The Beeches, William Street,
Torphins, Aberdeenshire,
April 23.

Tailoring education to needs of ever-changing society

From Professor Sir Bryan Thwaites

Sir, Sir Claus Moser's speech to the Royal Society of Arts, as reported by you (April 18) under the headline "Standards in schools 'are still slipping'", is immensely depressing, not so much because of its long-standing truths as to the statistical trends but far more because it characterises the inability, or reluctance, of our educational and political leaders to face more fundamental questions about compulsory state education.

In the last three decades of the 1800s the authors of the first few Education Acts reacted very simply and briefly to what were generally perceived to be the needs of the society of the day: namely, a grasp of the three Rs and knowledge of morality and religion. A hundred years later society is immeasurably more complex and is changing at bewildering speed, so even those original most basic of aims are open to manifold interpretations.

The facts now are that no one can foretell the specific skills which will be needed by the general populace in 10 or 20 years' time, and that morality has succumbed to subjectivism. The

word "standards" therefore is no longer applicable to a system of so-called education which, by a large proportion of those of school age, is regarded as irrelevant to their adult life.

Let us therefore channel the enormous amount of time and energy which is nowadays being spent on irrelevant minutiae, based on 19th-century notions, into more fundamental appraisals of what the children of the 1990s need for the 2020s.

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN THWAITES,
Miltonmore, Winchester, Hampshire,
April 18.

From Mrs Katie Ivens

Sir, Sir Claus Moser is right: education standards are slipping. The slip has become a vertiginous slide as the products of the Plowden primary system — in which whole-class teaching and proven methods of teaching the three Rs were abandoned in favour of "mixed methods" — pass through a still largely monolithic, egalitarian, comprehensive system pervaded by the dogma of "mixed ability".

But Sir Claus is also wrong. While

Showbiz bias in Bafta awards?

From Sir David Nicholas and Mr David Plowright

Sir, ITV's showing of last Sunday's awards ceremony by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (report, April 23) dishonoured a large section of British programme-making. The growing dominance of the showbiz side of Bafta resulted in 11 awards covering news, current affairs, the arts and sport being omitted from the programme seen by millions of viewers.

The one journalistic programme award shown in the broadcast was for *Panorama's* interview with the Princess of Wales and that was contrived by re-designating *Panorama* as a "talk show".

Among the winners excluded from the broadcast were ITN's Channel Four News coverage of war crimes in Yugoslavia (best news); BBC coverage of VE-Day celebrations (best live programme); BBC's *Death of Yugoslavia* (best factual series). The best single drama (BBC's *Persuasion*), all children's and arts programmes were also excluded.

An outstanding success in British film-making, recognised internationally with a string of Oscars, is our film *animation*. Bafta has shunted off the animators to a separate evening, out of sight of the cameras.

A whole raft of British programming, appreciated by millions, is thus being sidelined by showbiz values. A little extra time on the programme, some disciplining of endless, inane kissogram thank-yous and deft editing of inflated compilations could have found room for due recognition of home-bred programme excellence.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID NICHOLAS
(Chairman,
ITN, 1989-91),
DAVID PLOWRIGHT
(Chairman,
Granada Television, 1987-92),
Lodge Stables,
Kilbrook Park Road,
Blackheath, SE3,
April 23.

Milk and breast cancer

From Professor Jane A. Plant

Sir, According to Dr Helen Wiseman, of King's College London, consumption of soy protein in oriental cooking may account for the low rates of breast, colon and prostate cancer in countries such as Japan and China (report, April 17). I should like to suggest that the low consumption of dairy produce in these countries is also a factor.

Recent studies have implicated milk in the promotion of breast cancer. I myself have suffered from breast cancer, which recurred five times over a six-year period. I have always eaten and continue to eat considerable quantities of soy products.

The last time the cancer recurred, about three years ago, I and colleagues who have worked in China and similar countries concluded that low consumption of dairy produce was one of the key differences between Western and oriental diets. I gave up all dairy produce and my secondary tumours disappeared and I have had no subsequent illness.

Yours faithfully,
JANE PLANT,
12 Debdale Lane,
Keyworth, Nottingham,
April 18.

After Levin's blood

From Mr Tim Towle

Sir, Anjana Ahuja reports (Body and Mind, April 23) that researchers are finding that those who construct long and complex sentences may be less likely to contract Alzheimer's disease. Bernard Levin has a public responsibility to send them a blood sample forthwith.

Yours etc,
TIM TOWLE,
Beehive Cottage,
2a Frensham Road,
Farnham, Surrey,
April 23.

Youth and the Church

From the Reverend Alan Cooke

Sir, A teacher who talks in tendentious terms of "churchianity" and "priestcraft" as contrasted with "the real world" (Mr John Barmen's letter, April 17) may not be the best person to help his students learn more about the work and function of a priest.

However, there will remain in most communities hard-working priests and ministers who would be perfectly willing to respond to any teacher's invitation and speak to students about their vocation and about why it is both necessary and fulfilling.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN COOKE,
The Vicarage,
Milne Street,
Chadderton, Oldham,
Greater Manchester,
April 22.

Never too late

From Mr T. J. Bellers

Sir, Mr John Orton's letter (April 17) about Voluntary Service Overseas having a 70-year upper age limit prompts me to say that British Executive Service Overseas, which currently sends out 700 senior volunteers overseas on aid assignments every year, has no upper age limit. Indeed, last year several 80-year-olds and even more hale and hearty people over 70 performed very worthwhile and professional short assistance assignments.

The bad news is that we don't pay anything and we send people to even more far-flung and underdeveloped countries!

Yours,
T. J. BELLERS, Director,
British Executive Service Overseas,
164 Vauxhall Bridge Road, SW1,
April 19.

Rock's reply on drugs

From the Chief Minister of Gibraltar

Sir, In his letter of April 19 the Spanish Ambassador in London alleges incorrectly that there is persistent drug trafficking from Gibraltar, with little or no action on the part of the Gibraltar authorities. He also wrongly implies that the new licensing procedures introduced in Gibraltar last July were confined to speedboats.

The measures introduced last July prohibited the importation of the particular type of vessel allegedly involved in drug trafficking between Morocco and Spain. Of the sixty or so such vessels then berthed in Gibraltar, about half were found to be here illegally and to be mainly owned and operated by Spaniards and UK citizens living on the Costa del Sol.

Some of these vessels left Gibraltar for good, others were confiscated by the authorities, and measures were taken to curtail the movements of the twelve or so which remain. Many

more are based in Spanish ports, where they appear to be subject to no form of control or limitation.

Gibraltar is committed to the fight against drugs. Our anti-drugs laws are much stronger than Spain's. It is illegal in Gibraltar to use cannabis and unlike Spain, Gibraltar has implemented all EU and UN requirements in the fight against drugs and money laundering. What little connection attaches to Gibraltar in the drug trade between Spain and Morocco will be eliminated.

If the Spanish authorities were to introduce the kind of legislation and controls which we have in Gibraltar, the movement of vessels engaged in cannabis-smuggling between Spain and Morocco would drop significantly, and fewer drugs would enter Gibraltar by land from Spain.

Yours faithfully,
J. BOSSANO,
Chief Minister,
6 Convent Place, Gibraltar,
April 19.

OBITUARIES

RAYMOND RAMSAY

Raymond Ramsay, MBE, surgeon and Japanese POW, died on April 3 aged 79. He was born on August 19, 1916.

A SURGEON whose character was moulded and strengthened by his gruelling experiences as a prisoner of war in Rangoon Jail, Raymond Ramsay was one of that first generation of consultants who built up the National Health Service in Britain. He was chairman of the medical management committee which designed Wexham Park Hospital, the second NHS hospital, after Swindon, to be built. He also chaired a similar committee for the nearby Nuffield private hospital.

With a deftness of personal approach and a medical dexterity which owed much to his wartime experiences, he proved an outstanding clinician. He pioneered surgical techniques in the provinces, being among the first to develop the use of X-ray during surgery. He was also at the forefront of developments in thyroid surgery.

Raymond Ramsay was born in a ramshackle tin hospital in the little town of Peddie, Cape Province, South Africa. His father, who ran a trading post, had gone there with the aim of making enough money to retire. Having achieved this by the mid-1920s, he moved back to Britain with his family. The young Ramsay was educated at St Marylebone Grammar School before going on in 1932 to study medicine at Barts. His brother was also a student there, and his father, with the willingness of an old trader, bargained for a discount in the fees.

Ramsay qualified as a doctor in 1938, but, with the outbreak of hostilities, volunteered for active service and was commissioned into the Royal Army Medical Corps and posted to India.

In 1941 Ramsay was due to take leave in Britain, but a few days before — while going through the somewhat absurd performance of taking a mounted sick parade for a cavalry regiment — his horse bolted and he was thrown, fracturing his arm. He was unable to return to England. In one sense, the accident was extremely fortunate. The ship he was to have sailed in was torpedoed on the way home and all its passengers perished.

Left behind in the East, however, Ramsay was not to evade a harrowing ordeal himself. Promoted to the rank of major, he was appointed Brigade Medical Officer to Orde Wingate's first expedition into Burma. Though tough, with a strong fighting spirit and trained for jungle manoeuvres, the expedition was severely outnumbered by the Japanese and suffered heavy losses. In order to survive, Wingate



ordered them to divide into several dispersal groups and try to work their way back to the British lines.

Taking command of one of these groups, Ramsay led his men back through the dense thickets. It was a perilous task and more than ten of the thirty under his command were slaughtered in jungle ambushes. Only six months later did they succeed in reaching a tributary of the Chindwin River on the other side of which, less than half a mile away, they could see the British lines. But, just when it seemed that safety was at hand, they were ambushed by a Japanese platoon, who opened fire at point blank range, and took the whole group prisoner.

Wounded in the foot, Ramsay would probably have died had it not been for the Japanese orderly who, taking pity on him, procured an elephant for him to ride. He also removed the bullet and dressed the wound with a bandage which Ramsay was to wear for the next six months, washing out the tattered scrap of cloth every day.

Ramsay arrived at Rangoon jail in 1943. As he sat in the solitary confinement of a dark cramped cell on his 28th birthday, a watery bowl of rice pushed under the grating each day, he remembered the predictions of a gypsy who had read his fortune as a child at a Somerset fair. She had foretold that he would become a surgeon, but that there would be darkness surrounding his 28th year.

Ramsay's medical skills were invaluable in the jail. He ran a hospital ward — known as the black — and organised a rota so that the prisoners, drained by hard labour, could each benefit in turn from a brief respite. He proved an inventive pharmacist. Men from the work parties found what they called "blue stones" — copper sulphate — which were crushed and mixed with water as an antidote for jungle sores. Guards were also bribed to bring in poppies which were fermented to produce a form of morphine, used to counteract dysentery and cholera. Old razor blades were purloined for primi-

tive surgery and bamboo canes were used to splint broken limbs. But when a Japanese guard gave Ramsay a bottle of sake, he — after long deliberations as to how best to use it — drank it with the chaplain in the small hours of the morning.

Diplomatic by nature, Ramsay proved himself a considerable negotiator with his captors. Once, a guard even risked his position to pay Ramsay the respect of a salute. Rather than retreating into loathing of his captors, Ramsay coped by laughing and poking fun at them. His irrepressible humour raised morale throughout the camp and helped many of his fellow prisoners to endure their ordeal.

After more than two years in captivity, with the war now ending, the Japanese prepared to evacuate the jail. Ramsay was given the unenviable task of dividing the men into those who could march and those who were too weak to make the journey. Fortunately, those who stayed were in the event spared. Those who marched had a perilous journey, staggering barefoot in the scorching heat along a railway line amid the closing stages of the war as the Allied troops advanced. They were eventually rescued by an advancing battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment, though the prisoners, their eyesight blurred by starvation, could hardly recognise them.

After a brief period of recuperation in India, Ramsay was posted back to Britain. As the first medical officer to return from Japanese captivity, his advice was sought over the treatment which would be required for POWs. A number of psychiatrists had been provided, but Ramsay considered they would not be needed. Anyone who had survived the brutal conditions of a Japanese camp would have developed their own inner mechanisms to cope, he said.

Ramsay returned to Barts in 1946 to become senior demonstrator in anatomy. One evening a friend stopped him by the fountain to show him the paper with news that he had been appointed MBE (mail).

He then went to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital where he gained his FRCS in 1949. He became senior surgical registrar at the Bristol Royal Infirmary in 1951. Two years later he was appointed consultant general surgeon to the Windsor group of hospitals.

Outside his work he was a keen sailor, and generations of students and fellow doctors from Barts enjoyed his hospitality on the yacht which he moored on the Isle of Wight.

Raymond Ramsay is survived by his wife Lillian, whom he married in 1952, and by three sons.

EVA JONES

Eva Jones, author, died in London on April 17 aged 82. She was born in Berlin on July 27, 1913.



A GERMAN Jew, cast adrift from her culture by the rise of Nazism, Eva Jones lived a life of displacement, feeling, as she put it, "like a plant with its roots in the air". It was not until she was 56 that she published her first volume of poetry, *Just a Woman*, which was to set her on her career as a writer. In 1976 she published a novel *Thirteen* — the first-person narrative of a precocious adolescent who falls in love with her 50-year-old therapist. She followed this with four more novels: *Double Decker*, *Malou*, *Miss Stipplekin* and *Taloo*.

Eva Solon, as she was before she married, was born in Berlin, the daughter of a barrister. An effervescent girl, she made the acquaintance of her future husband, Rudy Jonas, in breathless snatches of conversation as they danced the tango. Then she was just 16, but two years after she had fled from Germany to Paris in 1933, she married him.

At that time he was a student, while she was earning her living as a singer in an anti-Nazi cabaret. Penurious, they would spend their evenings in Montmartre, eking out a café crème while they mingled with the exiled literary and intellectual elite of Germany. Among their acquaintances they included Thomas Mann. During the day she trained as an opera singer. Her teacher, recognising the fineness of her soprano voice — a voice capable of stretching to the uppermost reaches of Mozart's Queen of the Night — coached her without payment for six years.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, Eva Jones was interned with other German Jewish refugees in the Camp de Gurs in the Pyrenees. But recognising the danger she was in when the Germans began to advance she escaped — by then so thin that she could slip through the wire. Earning a meagre living selling newspapers in Toulouse, she was reunited with her husband.

Shortly afterwards Eva Jones was again sent to an enforced residence in the Pyrenees, but again escaped, having heard that all Jews were to be deported to Poland. However, it was not long until German troops were to march into the "free zone" and she and her husband were forced to flee once more. With a gun-smuggler as a guide, they crossed the Pyrenees one freezing snowbound December night, in a journey so tough, her husband was later to recall, that had Eva not forced him onwards with their guide's revolver at his back, he would never have made it. On their arrival in a small Spanish village they were incarcerated but not deported, as they would have been had they tried to enter the country by more orthodox means.

It was the British Embassy which eventually negotiated their release. Eva Jones was flown, via Gibraltar, to Oxford where she joined her parents who had escaped from Berlin shortly before the outbreak of war. Her husband Rudy Jonas enlisted in the British Army and changed his name to Jones. He was among the first to march into his home city of Berlin, but for him it was a sour victory. He arrived to find that his whole family had been killed.

After the war Eva Jones and her husband settled in Hampstead. She taught German and became involved in a flourishing poetry scene. But, encountering much discrimination as an "enemy alien," she never sang professionally again. Her first book of poetry was published in 1969. It was followed by five novels. Her second, *Double Decker*, was strongly autobiographical in tone. "Most of us had fled the German Fatherland when Hitler came to power in 1933. Now that's a single sentence. 15 words and one full stop. But squeezed into it is such torment and pain that it could not be contained in one hundred volumes," Jones's narrator says. *Malou*, the story of a gifted singer who refuses to recognise her talents, also rings a wistfully autobiographical note.

But Eva Jones never lingered overmuch in the past. Ever passionate in her pursuit of new ideas, she developed a deep interest in Eastern spirituality. It was she, too, who was behind her husband when at the age of 75 he took a degree at the LSE followed by a PhD. Even when she suffered a severe stroke in 1988 she struggled to go on writing, dictating her work to a friend.

Eva Jones is survived by her husband and their daughter.

PROFESSOR HUGH COCKERELL

Professor Hugh Cockerell, OBE, Secretary of the Chartered Insurance Institute, 1945-71, and subsequently Professor of Insurance Studies at City University, died on April 21 aged 86. He was born on May 16, 1909.

HUGH COCKERELL was the leading British authority on the theory and practice of insurance. A naturally shy man, his self-effacing nature hid a wide range of talents and accomplishments. During his 25 years as the chief executive of the Chartered Insurance Institute, he transformed its standing as the professional body of the insurance world and several of his publications

have become standard works. Although Cockerell ended his life as a highly respected City and academic figure, that was hardly an outcome that could have been foreseen in his early years.

His father ran a family estate agency and Hugh Cockerell grew up in Putney as an only child. He was sent to boarding schools from the age of seven, so that he could be with other children. But he hated Bridlington School in Yorkshire — not least for its lumpy porridge.

He sought consolation by learning to play bridge, a passion that lasted a lifetime. But at the age of 16 he had to leave Bridlington when his father's business collapsed. Taking a job as a clerk processing motor insurance

claims, he continued to work determinedly by night to attain the academic and professional qualifications he lacked.

Cockerell studied for an external degree in history at King's College London, where he got a first. He excelled too in his professional exams, passing the Chartered Insurance Institute's Fellowship examination, the industry's top qualification, three years before he was even entitled to apply. But Cockerell found the institute fustily hierarchical.

He wrote an anonymous article for his trade union journal entitled *What's wrong with the CII?* It caused a storm in the insurance world, but the author's identity was never uncovered.

Cockerell was a lifelong supporter of the Labour Party and it was at a Fabian Summer School in 1936 that he first met Fanny Jochelman, who was making a name for herself as a writer.

They daringly decided to live together in what was then known as a "trial marriage". Though they both felt the trial a failure, in the end they changed their minds and married in 1938. They remained devotedly together until her death nearly fifty years later.

Cockerell worked for Naval Intelligence during the war. He learnt Japanese and sought to decipher intercepted Japanese signals. In his spare time he read for the Bar and qualified as a barrister. He was called by the Middle



Temple in 1945. That same year he applied successfully to become the Secretary of the CII, without admitting authorship of his anonymous article.

He immediately embarked on a programme of wholesale reform of the institute. He was determined to impress on the insurance industry the need for professional training to the highest standards. He wanted to place CII qualifications on a par with university degrees and to win worldwide recognition for the institute. Under him, CII membership doubled, and he was appointed OBE in 1964.

Cockerell published the first of his 13 books in 1957. *Teach Yourself Insurance* brought an apparently dry subject elegantly to life. Subsequent books included a portrait of Lloyd's and the *Dictionary of Insurance*.

On retirement from the CII in 1971 he became a Senior Research Fellow at the City University and later Professor of Insurance Studies there. He

built up from scratch a now thriving faculty. The university awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1990.

At a CII lunch, given last September to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his joining the institute, Cockerell talked candidly about the successes and failures of the insurance industry during his lifetime. He was proud to have given it a proper and professional structure. But he regretted that during his tenure "the institute failed to convince Lloyd's that underwriters needed a proper technical education and failed to convince many life insurance companies of the need for their sales staff to operate in a professional manner".

"We did our best but everybody is the prisoner of preconceived ideas," he continued. "Certainly I was, for in all I did I thought of the needs of the lean and hungry young clerks — such as I had been, when setting out on an insurance career. I may have grown to be a fat cat, but the lean and hungry man within me kept gnawing away." After paying grateful tribute to the current CII staff, he ended the speech: "And now I must go home and feed my own lean and hungry cats."

Cockerell loved cats and crosswords: he would complete *The Times* crossword each day, normally well within the half-hour. Formidably well-read, he was a devotee of Tolstoy, contributing wittily erudite articles to the *Troilope* society's journal.

Hugh Cockerell is survived by his two sons and a daughter.

DR PETER NEWBOLD

Dr Peter Newbold, consultant dermatologist, Worcester Royal Infirmary, 1973-95, died from leukaemia on March 28 aged 57. He was born in Manchester on June 23, 1938.

THERE were two strands to Peter Newbold's life. Professionally, he practised as a physician in Worcester; aesthetically, he was a connoisseur of music, words and the fine arts. Each of these strands derived its strength from his encyclopaedic erudition, supported by a photographic memory.

Peter Charles Hutchinson Newbold was educated at King William's College, Isle of Man, where he took Classics, and then read medicine at New College, Oxford, before going on to Guy's Hospital Medical School, London.

After junior hospital training posts in London, he spent two years at the Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, California. This was followed by another two years in Cambridge and he was awarded the Oxford DM in 1974 for his thesis on skin cancers. He was appointed as consultant dermatologist to the Worcester Royal Infirmary in 1973. There he built up a busy dermatological service which, without junior staff, made heavy demands on his time and health; and, in keeping with his deeply held Christian principles, he voluntarily extended his care and compassion to patients suffering from terminal illnesses.

He continued to keep a base in London, where he had a wide circle of friends who

shared his love of opera, fine arts and travel. A generous host, he made use of his membership of the Travellers Club to entertain his friends in elegant surroundings with good food and wine — and with conversation which could range from obscure 18th-century operas to contemporary musicals, from 15th-century stained glass manufacture to the glories of Wren's City churches, and from princely meals taken in Michelin-starred restaurants. He also had a sharp eye for the absurdities of everyday life and would entertain his guests by reading out snippets from the newspapers.

An indefatigable traveller, speaking fluent French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, he would think nothing of flying to San Francisco for a few days to hear Dame Joan Sutherland open in a new production at the Opera House or of spending a weekend in Erfurt in Germany, photographing 16th-century stained glass windows in the church where Luther had preached.

Patrician in appearance, he set himself the highest standards and expected high standards from others; he had little time for fools, and none at all for incompetence. Both his legs were broken some years ago in a traffic accident. Since then he had suffered from recurrent infections which gradually undermined his health and forced him to retire from his work at the early age of 56.

He never married.

PERSONAL COLUMN

FOR SALE

SOLE: Complete house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 porches, 2 garages, 2 sheds, 2 outbuildings, 2 fences, 2 gates, 2 paths, 2 lawns, 2 gardens, 2 parks, 2 forests, 2 mountains, 2 rivers, 2 lakes, 2 seas, 2 oceans, 2 planets, 2 galaxies, 2 universes, 2 everything.

RENTALS

CHURCHILL: Complete house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 porches, 2 garages, 2 sheds, 2 outbuildings, 2 fences, 2 gates, 2 paths, 2 lawns, 2 gardens, 2 parks, 2 forests, 2 mountains, 2 rivers, 2 lakes, 2 seas, 2 oceans, 2 planets, 2 galaxies, 2 universes, 2 everything.

SERVICES

ANCESTRY: Complete house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 porches, 2 garages, 2 sheds, 2 outbuildings, 2 fences, 2 gates, 2 paths, 2 lawns, 2 gardens, 2 parks, 2 forests, 2 mountains, 2 rivers, 2 lakes, 2 seas, 2 oceans, 2 planets, 2 galaxies, 2 universes, 2 everything.

SPECIALISTS

YOU should write a book. The story of your life, your family, your friends, your enemies, your loves, your hates, your dreams, your nightmares, your hopes, your fears, your joys, your sorrows, your triumphs, your defeats, your successes, your failures, your everything.

WANTED

PRE 1940s clothes: Complete house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 porches, 2 garages, 2 sheds, 2 outbuildings, 2 fences, 2 gates, 2 paths, 2 lawns, 2 gardens, 2 parks, 2 forests, 2 mountains, 2 rivers, 2 lakes, 2 seas, 2 oceans, 2 planets, 2 galaxies, 2 universes, 2 everything.

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

CHURCHILL: Complete house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 porches, 2 garages, 2 sheds, 2 outbuildings, 2 fences, 2 gates, 2 paths, 2 lawns, 2 gardens, 2 parks, 2 forests, 2 mountains, 2 rivers, 2 lakes, 2 seas, 2 oceans, 2 planets, 2 galaxies, 2 universes, 2 everything.

UK HOLIDAYS

CHURCHILL: Complete house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 porches, 2 garages, 2 sheds, 2 outbuildings, 2 fences, 2 gates, 2 paths, 2 lawns, 2 gardens, 2 parks, 2 forests, 2 mountains, 2 rivers, 2 lakes, 2 seas, 2 oceans, 2 planets, 2 galaxies, 2 universes, 2 everything.

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

CHURCHILL: Complete house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 living rooms, 2 dining rooms, 2 kitchens, 2 porches, 2 garages, 2 sheds, 2 outbuildings, 2 fences, 2 gates, 2 paths, 2 lawns, 2 gardens, 2 parks, 2 forests, 2 mountains, 2 rivers, 2 lakes, 2 seas, 2 oceans, 2 planets, 2 galaxies, 2 universes, 2 everything.

FLIGHTSEATS

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CAPITAL FLIGHTS

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LEGAL NOTICES

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A HOME FOR LIFE

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DEATH OF MR. RUPERT BROOKE

SUNSTROKE AT LEMNOS. We regret to record the death, on April 23, at Lemnos, from the effects of sunstroke, of Rupert Brooke, the poet, a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Naval Division.

"W.S.C." writes: "Rupert Brooke is dead. A telegram from the Admiralty tells us that this life has closed at the moment when it seemed to have reached its springtime. A voice had become audible, a note had been struck, more true, more thrilling, more able to do justice to the nobility of our youth in arms engaged in this present war, than any other. More able to express their thoughts of self-surrender, and with a power to carry comfort to those who watch them so intently from afar. The voice has been swiftly still. Only the echoes and the memory remain; but they will linger. During the last few months of his life, months of preparation in gallant comradeship and open air, the poet-soldier told with all the simple force of genius the sorrow of youth about to die, and the sure triumphant consolations of a sincere and valiant spirit. He expected to die: he was willing to die for the dear England whose beauty and majesty he knew; and he advanced towards the brink in

ON THIS DAY

April 26, 1915

The news of the death of Rupert Brooke (1897-1915) came to *The Times* from the Admiralty where Winston Churchill was First Lord, and where he wrote this appreciation of the poet.

perfect serenity, with absolute conviction of the rightness of his country's cause and a heart devoid of hate for fellow-men. The very thoughts to which he gave expression in the few war sonnets he has left behind will be shared by many young men, moving resolutely forward into this, the hardest, the cruellest, and the least-rewarded of all the wars that men have fought. They are a whole history and revelation of Rupert Brooke himself. Joyous, fearless, versatile, deeply instructed, with classic symmetry of mind and body, ruled by high undoubting purpose, he was all that one would wish England's noblest sons to be in days when no sacrifice but the

most precious is acceptable, and the most precious is that which is most freely proffered. In September he was given a commission as sub-lieutenant in the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division, and took part in the expedition to Anvers; and after a winter's training at Blandford Camp he sailed on February 28 for the Dardanelles. He had a slight sunstroke early in April, and this seems to have led to a serious illness, ending last Friday in his death from blood-poisoning on board a French hospital ship. He was buried in Lemnos on Saturday. Few men have been so instantly and so lastingly attractive; and every month seemed to bring out of his nature some new treasure of courage, gentleness, or manly wisdom. It is clear that he was surprised himself, and that he found in his readiness to do his duty a high religious joy. Those five sonnets published in "New Numbers" last December express this joy without the mingling and emotional insecurity of his earlier verse. The one which the Dean of St Paul's quoted in his sermon on Easter Day deserved the praise which he gave to it. Finer still, perhaps, was the one on the Dead, which ends thus: There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter and in by the

100

25



ARTS 35-37

Kathryn Harries triumphant in a dazzling Fidelio



EDUCATION 39

Why some parents prefer to teach their children at home



SPORT 41-48

Young squire trains aim on Atlanta

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Pages 43, 44

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY APRIL 26 1996

Doubts over rates after dull sales data

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE future direction of interest rates remains uncertain after publication yesterday of new data showing weaker than expected growth in retail sales.

Retail sales volumes rose by just 0.2 per cent in March, according to figures issued by the Office of National Statistics, well below the expected 0.5 per cent.

However, stronger underlying growth in the sales figures hinted at a gradual return of consumer confidence, although it stopped short of signalling the return of the "feel-good" factor.

Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist with NatWest Markets, said: "Consumers may not yet be feeling good, but they are certainly feeling better."

Between January and March, the volume of sales was 0.4 per cent higher than in the previous three months and 2.1 per cent up on the same period of 1995. Growth was especially strong in clothing and footwear and in household goods, supporting other evidence of recovery in the housing sector.

With other statistics, such as CBI industrial data published this week, showing continuing weakness in other areas of the economy, the immediate outlook for interest rates will be dictated by first-quarter GDP figures, due out on Monday. If GDP is below expectations, Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, may be tempted to seek another quarter-point rate cut when he meets Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, on May 8.

□ Evidence that the US economy remains robust emerged yesterday with data showing sales of existing homes rising 6.9 per cent in March. The strong growth was attributed to a rush to complete purchases before interest rate rises took effect. Year-on-year sales rose by 16 per cent, but analysts say that sales growth will slow in coming months. US new jobs claimants rose slightly for the week to April 20, from 359,000 to 372,000.



Peter Davis, chief executive of the Prudential, has made no secret of his ambition to buy a building society or insurer "at the right price"

Pru heads running to take over the Woolwich

By ROBERT MILLER AND PATRICIA TEHAN

PRUDENTIAL, Britain's biggest insurer which manages £82 billion, has emerged as a clear contender to take over the Woolwich Building Society.

Last night sources in both camps unofficially emphasised that any bid talks were at a very early stage and that the Prudential had not yet begun to conduct a "due diligence" search on the Woolwich books. The Woolwich became a prime takeover target after the abrupt departure of its chief executive Peter Robinson earlier this month over allegations of abuses of expenses and other irregularities. After a stormy annual general meeting last week one observer said: "The whole industry is casting its slide rule over the Woolwich."

If the Prudential does make a successful bid for the third largest society, which plans to become a £3 billion stock market company next summer, the 3.5 million Woolwich savers and borrowers could be in line to receive an extra £125 in addition to the already planned average payout of £1,000.

Donald Kirkham, the acting chief executive of the Woolwich, said yesterday that the society had received "around half a dozen" approaches from firms asking if it would be interested in a partnership or closer cooperation. He added: "I cannot rule out anything and I can never say never because it is too long a period," but repeated that the society's firm intention was to float and to remain independent.

The Prudential, which is

also understood to have made a takeover approach to Friends Provident, a fellow insurer, said: "We never comment on market rumours." Last October the Prudential announced that it was to apply for a banking licence with a view to starting up the operation later this year.

Peter Davis, the chief executive of the Prudential, has made no secret of his ambition to buy a building society or insurer "at the right price" nor would he object to running two strong brand names in tandem by keeping the well-known and respected Woolwich name under the Pru umbrella. The Prudential can expect strong opposition from rivals in its bid to buy the Woolwich. Those most often mentioned include BAT, the

financial services and tobacco group, the Royal Bank of Scotland, National Australia Bank and the Midland.

As well as seeking a new permanent chief executive The Times has learned that the Woolwich has started a search for a new finance director. The board appointed the head-hunters Whitehead Mann to find a finance director to replace Mike Tuke, 57, who has held the job for 16 months. Mr Tuke has been with the Woolwich since 1962.

Mr Kirkham, the former chief executive of the Woolwich who stepped in temporarily to fill the gap left by Mr Robinson at the beginning of this month, said the normal retirement age for directors is 60. He said: "Mike Tuke wants to retire early at the end

of this year, beginning of next." He added that the society hopes the new finance director will overlap with the Mr Tuke for several months before his retirement.

Mr Kirkham said Mr Tuke would have been 59 at the time of flotation, and "we did not want the crew on the flight deck changing not only when racing down the run-way but also in the first two or three years after takeoff."

He said the firm is in the middle of a final selection process, but hopes to dovetail the announcement with that of a new chief executive.

The decision to find a new finance director is believed to have been made as a result of advice from Schroders, the investment bank that is advising on the float.

ICI dips to £223m in first quarter

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

TOUGH markets for most of the chemicals industry hit ICI in the first quarter of this year, contributing to an 8.6 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £223 million.

The shares lost 28p to 926p as the market absorbed a trading update at the lower end of expectations and a warning that second-quarter figures would also fall short of last year's.

The company has deferred plans to invest £150 million in new plant at its Wilton complex on Teesside. Last year's second-half slump in industrial chemicals has already triggered a rationalisation programme that will claim thousands of jobs in the next three years. Over the past year, 700 staff (1 per cent of the payroll) have gone and ICI plans to cut 5 to 6 per cent of workers each year for three more years.

Industrial chemicals, the biggest source of ICI's earnings, fell from a trading profit of £143 million in the first quarter of 1995 to £87 million in this year's. Petrochemicals reeled most from margin squeeze. Europe has been hard work for ICI, with volumes off 9 per cent.

Tempus, page 28

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3819.3	(+1.7)
Yield	3.89%	
FT-SE All share	1914.27	(+2.02)
Nickel	2230.10	(-51.85)
New York		
Dow Jones	5824.28	(-29.82)*
S&P Composite	648.39	(-1.78)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	8 3/4%	(8 3/4%)
Yield	6.85%	(6.85%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Libor long gilt	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
Future (Jun)	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)

STERLING

New York	1.5130*	(1.5158)
London		
\$	1.5113	(1.5128)
DM	2.3115	(2.3024)
FF	7.8045	(7.7754)
Sfr	1.8687	(1.8658)
Yen	160.97	(161.54)
£ Index	84.3	(84.0)

\$\$\$ DOLLAR

London		
DM	1.5190*	(1.5202)
FF	5.1815*	(5.1418)
Sfr	1.2357*	(1.2307)
Yen	168.45*	(168.55)
£ Index	96.7	(96.6)

Tokyo close Yen 106.70

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jul)	\$19.15	(\$19.95)
GOLO		
London close	\$394.25	(\$390.90)

* denotes midday trading price

Watchdog fines NatWest £75,000 for Pep errors

By ROBERT MILLER

THE biggest name in high street banking has incurred the largest fine to be handed down by a City watchdog so far this year.

National Westminster Bank was yesterday fined £75,000, with costs of £45,000, by the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation (Imro), the regulator responsible for fund managers.

Imro found NatWest guilty on two charges of breaching rules regarding the bank's tax-free Personal Equity Plan (Pep) business, which has 70,000 customers. NatWest said it had not had to compensate any clients. However, it is understood that the bank may have

had to buy extra shares in the market to reconcile its Pep records and book-keeping.

Imro said that for a period of more than three years, from November 1991 to February 1995, NatWest "did not fully reconcile and correct discrepancies revealed by its stock reconciliations" for 14 widely held shares. Further, Imro said that for 11 months in 1994 NatWest failed to carry out stock reconciliations for a further 11 less widely held shares.

On a second charge relating to inadequate stock reconciliations and poor record-keeping, Imro said records in relation to certain shares "were either missing or incomplete".

In July 1993, NatWest discovered the errors and discrepancies and immediately alerted Imro. On a subsequent visit in January 1994 by the watchdog's compliance officers, it was found that NatWest had not sufficiently altered its internal procedures and that too little remedial action had been taken. Imro said yesterday that the errors and rule breaches had not been fully corrected until February 1995.

The level of the fine reflects the watchdog's view that the rule breaches related to a vital part of investor protection. NatWest said that it had invested money in new technology systems and staff training but declined to say how much. The bank, which emphasised that no investors had been disadvantaged, added: "Whilst we acknowledge Imro's censure, we also confirm the regulator's statement that NatWest had now remedied these deficiencies."

Pennington, page 27

Lloyds TSB to shed 500 jobs in streamlining

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

LLOYDS TSB, the banking group created by the merger of Lloyds and TSB at the end of last year, is to cut 500 jobs as part of a plan to streamline its operations.

The job cuts, which are the first to be announced since the merger, will be made from the two banks' administration centres in Birmingham and Bristol.

The administration centre for the new Lloyds TSB's retail financial services business will be situated at Lloyds' offices in Cannon House, Bristol.

TSB's Victoria House, in Birmingham will be run down

and closed at the end of next year. The two banks employ 2,400 staff at the two sites, 2,200 of them in retail financial services.

Lloyds TSB estimates it will need 1,300 in the new administration centre, and will cut 500 jobs. It will also relocate another 400.

The cuts were condemned by Bifu, the banking union, which has estimated that 10,000 jobs will go as a result of the merger. John Townsend, TSB assistant secretary at Bifu, said: "This is just the start."

A Lloyds TSB spokeswoman said every effort would be

made to shed staff through natural wastage, redeployment, retraining and voluntary severance.

The spokeswoman said: "We cannot guarantee that there will be no compulsory redundancies, but we will move heaven and earth to make sure it is as painless as possible."

Peter Ellwood, group deputy chief executive said: "In order to achieve the benefits from a merger, some very hard decisions have to be taken and the location of our main administration centre was clearly going to be one of them."



Sir Evelyn: retained control

Rebuff for Rothschild as second director quits

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

NM ROTHSCHILD, one of the few remaining independent merchant banks in the City, has suffered its second serious defection with the departure of Anthony Fry, one of its highest-flying corporate financiers.

Mr Fry, 40, is senior director on a number of key accounts and had been seen as heir-apparent for the post of head of corporate finance. His clients include British Airways, Pearson, Flentech, Chrysalis and the Telegraph newspaper group.

Mr Fry is to move to BZW, Barclays' investment bank, where he will build up its

worldwide corporate finance presence in the media sector, and help to develop its UK corporate finance business.

His departure is bad news for Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, chairman of Rothschild, after the loss this week of Michael Phair, who headed up Rothschild's privatisation work in central Europe and other emerging markets. Mr Phair is joining UBS.

The two departures have been seen by outsiders as a further indication of the extent to which younger Rothschild directors feel that the bank does not have a clear strategy. Further departures

are expected. Last year, the bank's senior directors held tentative negotiations with NatWest Markets about a possible joint venture. However, although some of Rothschild's most senior directors were in favour of a link, Sir Evelyn was unwilling to lose any of his family control over the business.

Last summer, Smith New Court, the stockbroker in which it held a 26 per cent stake, agreed to a takeover by Merrill Lynch of the US. The deal ended Rothschild's special distribution relationship with SNC and left it without an obvious partner.

Important meetings begin with the minutes

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Rentokil bid tipped to succeed

Rentokil was tipped last night to win the £2.1 billion battle to take control of BET, the business services group, despite a last minute row involving the takeover panel.

BET called on the panel to discount 27 million shares sold by SBC Warburg, Rentokil brokers, to Salomon Brothers last week.

The takeover panel suggested it would not rule against Warburgs.

Shares in Rentokil, closed up 2.5p at 360p, while BET shares fell 1p to 203p.

JKX confident

JKX Oil and Gas, the oil exploration group with interests in the former Soviet Union, predicts it will break even in the first quarter of 1996. In its first year as a quoted company, JKX made a pre-tax loss of £2 million.

Halifax deal

The Halifax Building Society yesterday confirmed that it has bought 33 estate agency branches from the Alliance & Leicester for a nominal price probably as low as £1.

Profits fall

Austin Reed, the upmarket clothes retailer, saw pre-tax profits for 1995 fall from £5.3 million to £3.4 million.

It is paying an unchanged total dividend of 6p. Shares rose 5p to 244p.

Anagen better

Anagen, the diagnostics equipment maker, recovered 8p to 55p yesterday after falling 7p to 47p on Wednesday. Pre-tax losses were £1.75 million (£4 million loss), or a 3.8p loss (8.6p loss) per share.

Rhino down

Losses at Rhino Group, the novelty products and computer games company, sank a further £5.94 million to £8.51 million. Losses per share rose to 4.83p (2.24p).

Lucas deal

Lucas, the aerospace and car parts group, has won a \$20 million contract in South America to supply starters, alternators and distributors to Volkswagen do Brazil.

BPB stake up

BPB Industries is paying £21.5 million to take full control of Borgardt, the German manufacturer of special gypsum plasters. BPB has held a 20 per cent stake since 1987.



Christopher Brown, right, and Christopher Cook, who said rising export orders, including sales to Lockheed Martin of America marked a future growth

Seven more sales speed breakup of BR network

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE breakup of the British Rail passenger network gathered pace yesterday when tenders were invited for a further seven train franchises.

The move brings to 20 the franchises sold, or being prepared for sale, by Roger Salmon, the rail franchise director. This represents about 80 per cent of the BR network.

Mr Salmon invited bidders to qualify for the sale of the ScotRail, CrossCountry, Great Eastern, Merseyrail, Thameslink, West Anglia, Great Northern and Island Line franchises. The sales are

expected to be completed from November onwards.

The remaining five passenger franchises, including the London Euston-Glasgow main line route, will be offered for sale within the next two months. The Government hopes that all 25 will be in private hands by next April.

The seven latest franchises include the first to involve Labour-controlled Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs), which are bitterly opposed to rail privatisation and have held up the sale of urban routes. The sale of the ScotRail

franchise has been strongly criticised by Strathclyde PTE, which is responsible for the urban and suburban networks around Glasgow. However, a spokesman for Mr Salmon's Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (Opra) said he was optimistic of being able to "do business" with the Strathclyde executive.

Brian Wilson, Labour's railways spokesman, said the breakup of the railways was now no more than "a race against the electoral clock" as the Government struggled to complete the sell-off before

polling day. He said: "For the Tories to continue in this direction is purely a scorched-earth policy, before they are turfed out."

Mr Wilson said the Government faced formidable problems in selling ScotRail. Strathclyde PTE would "continue to fight the outrageous transfer of assets to private operators by all means at its disposal", he said.

ScotRail, which also runs the Anglo-Scottish sleepers to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fort William, Aberdeen and Inverness and is expected to be bid for by a management buyout team led by John Ellis, its managing director.

Richard Branson's Virgin Group is considering a bid for CrossCountry, which operates InterCity services that do not begin or end in London. The franchise has Britain's longest scheduled passenger route, the 702-mile Dundee to Penzance service.

Other likely bidders include Stagecoach, the bus group, which is pursuing every franchise that comes up for sale, and the National Express coach company.

Tramtrack Croydon, a consortium of Bombardier, EuroRail, CentreWest, Sir Robert McAlpine, Arney Construction and the Royal Bank of Scotland, has been selected as preferred bidder to build and operate a 25-mile tram link between Croydon and Wimbledon in south London.

Acquisitions help David Brown to record high

By FRASER NELSON

ACQUISITIONS helped David Brown, the international engineering supplier, to achieve a record pre-tax profit of £15.3 million (£12.5 million) in the year to February 2.

Sales in industrial gears, the company's main business, soared 8 per cent to £68.7 million, aided by the purchase of four David Brown gear companies which had been left aside when David Brown was bought by the current management in 1990. The acquisition costs were covered by the £15.5 million raised in a rights issue in May.

Operating profits from construction and military vehicles rose by 22 per cent to £8.2 million despite a downturn in military spending.

Industrial pumps delivered the weakest performance of the company's three sectors, with operating profits falling 15 per cent to £2.2 million.

Christopher Cook, joint chief executive, said the downturn came after customers altered orders at a late production stage, leading to overload in production. But he added that the results were only delayed, and next year's order book was at record levels. Mr Cook said that rising export orders, including sales to Lockheed Martin of America, the world's biggest defence group, marked a future growth area.

A final dividend of 5.2p (4.65p) makes a total of 7.6p (5.9p).

BUSINESS ROUND

Three are accused of fraud by Bank

THE Bank of England has charged a group of businessmen operating in Southampton with offences ranging from forgery to fraud. The Bank brought the charges at the City of London Magistrates' Court. The three were charged with specimen offences under the Banking Act and the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act. Peter Lennon was charged with offences under the Banking Act relating to fraudulent inducement to make a deposit and providing false information. He was also charged with forgery. Roger Charlesworth and Paul Hyans were charged with offences relating to fraudulent inducement to make a deposit. Mr Charlesworth was also charged with forgery and with offences relating to giving false information. All three were given bail.

Mr Charlesworth and Mr Hyans were, at the time of the offences, directors of a company called Hornesale and also traded as Charlesworth Hyans. The Bank obtained an injunction against the three in 1994, preventing them from continuing in business. The Bank yesterday said that the alleged offences relate to actions by the three in an attempt to raise funding for development of land near Orlando, Florida.

Ramco profit falls 53%

HIGH hopes for profits from a former communist oilfield tempered the share price of Ramco Energy, the Scottish oil group, as preliminary results showed a 53 per cent dip in pre-tax profits to £754,000 in the year to December 31. The company said lower contributions from Penzance dragged down an otherwise healthy trading period. It confirmed that it is in talks to jointly develop a project in Azerbaijan, tipped to have 2 million barrels of oil left unexplored by the Soviet Union. The single final dividend stays at 1p. The shares ended 10p lower at 61.5p.

Meridien on the menu

ACCOR, the French hotel group, is understood to have obtained potential financial backing to fund a bid for Granada's Meridien hotel chain. Accor is thought to be interested in examining all parts of Meridien, which Granada inherited in its takeover of Forte. Exceptional gains of £643 million propped up Accor's profits, for 30 per cent rise in last year's net attributable profit to £923 million. Had it not been for the sale of Elthor, a caterer, to Compass, net profits would have fallen 61 per cent. Pennington, page 27

Unipart rises to £32m

AN increase in export sales and continuing cost reductions helped Unipart Group, part of Europe's leading independent supplier of automotive parts and accessories, lift pre-tax profits to £32.6 million (£28.9 million) in the year to December 31. The company, 20 per cent owned by Rover and 46 per cent by its employees and managers, saw sales grow to £864 million (£774 million). Expansion was boosted by a number of new contracts with leading companies in the automotive and IT sectors.

Water bid under fire

WATER customer service groups are preparing their attack over plans by Severn Trent to take over South West Water. In evidence to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, Ofwat's regional customer service group for the Severn Trent area will complain that Severn Trent will have to pay a premium for South West and possibly curb capital investment programmes. They will also express fears that their prices could rise with the current average bill for South West at £329, against Severn Trent's £201.

Black workers 'earn less'

BLACK workers' pay is on average 5 per cent less than that of white workers, a new analysis of pay rates reports today. Black workers are also more likely to be in lower-paying jobs and though unemployment is falling, unemployment among black people is falling much less quickly than for white people. The TUC report uses information held on government computers to show a clear pay differential between black and white workers — and suggests a national minimum wage is the best way of closing the gap.

Linton Park slides

ADVERSE climatic conditions took a toll on full-year profits at Linton Park, whose activities span tea, coffee and citrus production to edible nuts and cold storage. Reduced profits from the company's agricultural interests and higher interest costs saw pre-tax profits slip to £9.77 million in the year to December 31, down from £12.8 million last time, in spite of turnover ahead to £174.8 million (£164.9 million). A maintained final foreign income dividend of 12.5p gives a total of 13.75p (17.5p) for the year, from earnings of 37.1p (39.0p) a share.

Rugby to build plant

RUGBY CEMENT is to invest more than £100 million in a new cement plant in Rugby, Warwickshire. It is Rugby Cement's largest ever investment and the first new plant of this size in the UK for more than a decade. The plant replaces an existing works but will have increased capacity, producing up to 1.35 million tonnes of cement a year, and will have an improved environmental performance. Amec Construction will carry out the early engineering design of the plant and is the preferred contractor for the project.

SE awaits approval

THE board of the Stock Exchange is to wait for regulatory approval for its proposals for a new order-driven electronic trading system before issuing details in June. The exchange's announcement yesterday came in response to criticism that its second phase of consultation on an order-driven system had been delayed. It had originally said that it hoped to start the second phase next month. The June consultation document will describe in detail the proposed new system, including the regulatory issues and tax issues agreed with the Treasury.

Police appeal for help from former staff at Rom Data

By ROBERT MILLER

THE senior police officer heading the Serious Fraud Office investigation into Rom Data, the West Country computer firm that crashed after receiving £850,000 of taxpayers' money, has issued a nationwide appeal for former employees to contact the Devon and Cornwall fraud squad.

Detective Inspector Steven Harrison, who heads the joint SFO inquiry, said yesterday that nearly 400 former Rom Data staff had been interviewed or sent questionnaires. Senior "influential" staff have also given statements.

Mr Harrison said: "We believe there are possibly up to another 100 former Rom Data employees who may be able to help us. We would like them to



Oppenheim: secret report

contact our Truro incident room before we complete the first part of our investigation." In January, police interviewed John Dawson, a former Rom Data director, and

his wife Elizabeth, at their Cork home. Mr Dawson, a former Conservative city councillor in Bath, has a history of bad debts in Britain and the Caribbean. He left the UK in the early 1980s after the collapse of John Dawson Motor (Holdings), with personal and business debts of nearly £2 million.

The SFO investigation is looking at other companies in the South West that received government grants. A secret DTI report outlines how hundreds of companies received tens of millions of pounds in assistance but subsequently collapsed. Phillip Oppenheim, Trade Minister, refuses to publish the report in spite of repeated requests from David Jamieson, Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport.

Australian SE may float itself

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

IN WHAT looks likely to cause a massive headache for Australia's regulation experts, the Australian stock exchange is looking at the possibility of floating itself on its own market.

The radical proposals, which are to be considered by an internal stock exchange task force in Sydney next week, come amid a growing feeling among exchange members that its existing mutual status is both outdated and inappropriate.

At present, the exchange is owned by 520 stockbroking firms and all revenue earned from company listings is channelled straight back into exchange development. Under a new corporatised structure, however, owners of the exchange would be entitled to receive regular dividends. Last year, the exchange earned \$12 million on the back of assets of \$136 million. Maurice Newman, the stock exchange

chairman, who has long been in favour of demutualising the exchange, says that a float has received considerable interest from the exchange's members.

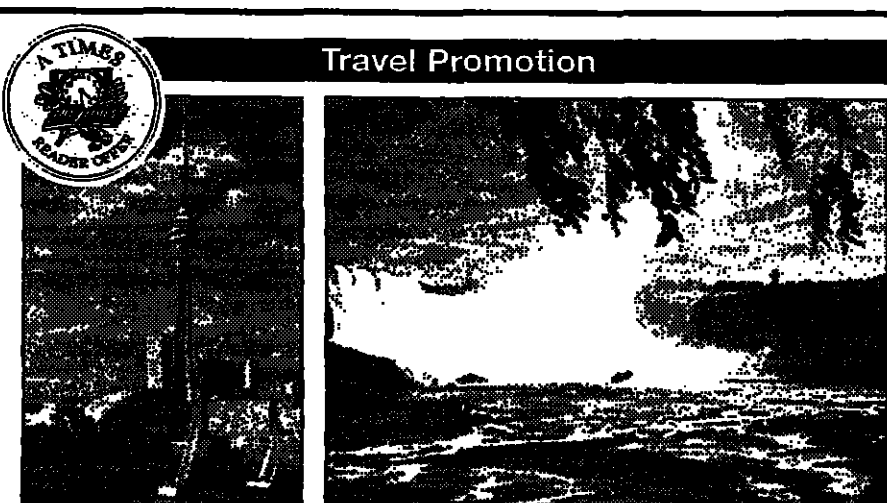
A spokesman for the exchange said yesterday: "The mutual status of the ASX has served it well but it has gone as far as it can. With 90 per cent of trade going through ten big corporate members, many of whom are ultimately owned offshore, it is anachronistic to talk about single member firms." He said that future ownership of the exchange could include private investors, institutions and even government entities.

Anecdotal evidence certainly seems to suggest a groundswell of support, with one private client broker saying: "A float would allow independent experts to apply a fair value to the stock exchange and deliver a proper return to the members

that have built up the exchange." Another market player adds simply: "On the basis of the growth in market activity which the exchange has experienced over the past few years, you'd have to say that it would seem to be a bloody good investment."

A rather large question mark remains, however, over just how a listed stock exchange could be regulated. The exchange spokesman points out: "We regulate the market, and a float would present a fundamental problem of who regulates where you are regulating your own company. It just wouldn't make sense."

The task force is expected to report formally to the stock exchange board in June, with a float, if approved, by at least 75 per cent of the stock exchange's membership, likely to take place in 1997.



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	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.02	1.96
Austria S	17.24	15.74
Belgium F	8.11	8.11
Canada S	2.179	2.019
Cyprus Cyp	0.755	0.700
Denmark K	7.87	7.72
Finland Mk	9.51	8.71
France F	6.20	7.56
Germany D	2.48	2.25
Greece D	364.00	350.00
Hong Kong \$	11.25	11.35
Ireland P	1.02	0.94
Israel S	5.190	4.540
Italy Lira	2401.00	2300.00
Japan Yen	176.30	160.30
Netherlands Gld	0.585	0.540
New Zealand \$	2.75	2.534
Norway Kr	10.80	9.70
Portugal Esc	247.50	220.00
Spain Pta	166.50	155.00
Sweden Kr	10.85	10.65
Switzerland F	2.00	1.92
Turkey Lira	116845	108845
USA \$	1.610	1.490

Rates for small denomination bank notes, as supplied by Reuters Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of business yesterday.

□ Sell-offs ignore benefits of integration □ Public humiliation the best penalty □ Five-star French fancy

Rattling down convergent tracks

IN 15 years of state sell-offs, one unchanging rule has been that you never get what you pay for. This is because a minister's writ never extends as far as the promises in the prospectus claim, a fact that should be kept in mind by the one and a half million people who have expressed an interest in Railtrack.

Utility services are goods like any other, subject to the usual laws of economics. Demand calls for supply. If the risk/reward ratio is inadequate then government, or philanthropists, will have to step in.

When our Victorian forefathers found their streets choked with sewage, their water polluted and an embarrassment of ailing citizens, they built sewers and aqueducts. When science offered the chance to light those streets with gas, and then electricity, companies and concerned citizens stepped in.

And what was the common feature among successful solutions? Vertical integration. Monopoly utilities bought the coal, produced the gas or electricity, and distributed it to the consumers they billed. Nationalisation increased the integration through consolidation.

In successive privatisations, the Government has sought to

counter this fact of nature. In lieu of tough regulation, it has progressively introduced artificial competition. But what market forces assemble, politicians cannot always keep asunder.

British Gas, privatised as a monopoly, bound like Gulliver by regulation, writhes helplessly as pygmy rivals grow fat. BT talks to Mercury, in an effort to re-connect the overseas links stripped from it at privatisation, to counter the strictures on its business in Britain.

Hanson seeks to re-assemble vertical monopolies in electricity, as the Government steps in to block bids by National Power and PowerGen to do the same. And what is the consequence? Share prices rise and fall on a regulator's whim, or a minister's. Consistency flies out of the window. Utility shares have become about as predictable as the National Lottery.

What credence, then, can we place in the prospectus for Railtrack? Track, signals and trains are a single system.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel did not build the Great Western Railway only to offer track to the highest bidder. Only a fool, a management consultant or a minister could imagine that the structure of Britain's railway will remain unchallenged by market forces after privatisation.

On that basis, the sooner the bids start to arrive the better. But if electricity is any guide it is the train operating companies, not Railtrack itself, that will be allowed to lead the return to common sense.

Put the bankers in the stocks

THIS column has been afforded a glimpse of Michael Howard's tough new penal code. Traffic offences will in future attract fines of a whole 20p, rising to a full pound if someone is killed. Armed robbers will be jailed overnight; murderers can expect to miss several episodes of *Eastenders* while banged up,



Fantasy? Then explain, if you can, the logic of fining National Westminster, which made £1.7 billion profit last year, a full £75,000 for failing to keep proper track of its customers' assets, a breach of the rules that continued for more than a year after it was brought to the attention of the regulator.

We try not to expect too much of the clearing banks, but as a bare minimum we ask them to keep track of how much of our money they have — it makes for easier housekeeping and fewer sleepless nights that way. The point is not that the NatWest's failings were largely technical

and did not put accountholders' money at risk. It is that the punishment for the offences is grotesquely inadequate.

A hit of £75,000 would probably have finished off the average small independent financial adviser. It is a nonsense to impose it on a vast clearer — it took the bank 22 minutes last year to earn that amount. The trick is to ensure that the damage for the mighty NatWest is equal to that for the financially crippled small adviser. Mistakes happen, and no one should be bankrupted for a single fault, but a £75,000 fine is at the top end of those imposed recently by Imro and was intended to emphasise the severity of the case.

Public thrashing of the responsible employees and relevant director, although not without some appeal as a spectacle, is probably not on. But bad publicity is almost as effective. The building society ombudsman already has the power to require miscreants to place full-page advertisements in the national

press admitting their sins. Clearing banks should be required to do the same, and not just tucked away on the financial pages of the broadsheet heavies but right there in the tabloids, where the maximum number of potential accountholders can see them. The principle can be extended. Forget the fines; try a dose of public humiliation.

Booking in for Méri dien

ACCOR was in town yesterday to lay down a firm marker of interest for the posh hotels being sold by Granada. This French outfit is a curious beast, combining hotels, luncheon vouchers and a stake in the British caterer Compass, all topped with £2 billion of debt. It lost out to Forte for the Méri dien chain two years ago in spite of heavy financial backing. This time might turn out even trickier. Granada is putting out its prospectus next month, and Sir

Rocco Forte has his own backers. The price is raised by inclusion of some Forte hotels. The bits that the French want are worth £700 million, assuming Granada will split the package. The latter has suggested that the taxpayer might favour this, but the market has doubts. Much *Gallie amour propre* is tied up in a rematch.

Dark thoughts

THE DAY after the latest electric shock, and we are all casting around for reasons. Here is one, perhaps a conspiracy theory, perhaps genuine. The generators did not endear themselves to the Government during the bloody and indecisive shambles that was the winding-down of the British coal industry. National Power and PowerGen initially preferred to take cheaper foreign imports.

A deal was struck which involved the regional companies taking coal-backed contracts, but only after fractious interchanges between the DTI and the generators. Revenge, best eaten cold, is even tastier laced with political expediency. On this basis the next course, now National Power has had its defences stripped away, is the American purchase of the biggest generator.



Power shift: John Baker, right, the chairman of National Power, replaced Bernard Taylor as chairman of Medeva at the pharmaceutical company's annual general meeting yesterday

Etam warning follows slump

By CLARE STEWART

ETAM, the high-street fashion retailer, continues to struggle as profits slumped and the outlook for 1996 looks bleak. After three profit warnings and a boardroom clear-out in 1995, pre-tax profits for the year to January 31 plummeted to £152,000 (£10.6 million). Sales at the group, which includes the Snob and Tammy Girl outlets, have not improved and

the group is giving warning that first-half operating losses are set to rise.

Etam says it is looking to rebuild margins but the full effect is not expected to be seen in the balance sheet until 1997. It is paying a final dividend of 0.75p (5.75p), making a total for the year of 1.25p (7.7p). The shares closed 1p lower at 164p.

Trinity Holdings' shares hit

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

SHARES in Trinity Holdings, the specialist vehicle maker, tumbled 19p to 402p as the company cautioned about a slowdown in the first half of its new financial year. The warning that profits would be skewed to the second half of 1996-97 came as the fire-engine-to-refuse collector company announced a 22 per cent increase in profits to £16 million for the year ending January 1996. The total

dividend rises 15 per cent to 8.2p. A final of 5.6p is payable on July 31. Vanni Treves, the chairman, said slower sales in Malaysia and restructuring in its airport vehicle division, after the acquisition of two companies, would dampen profits growth in the first half. But he was more bullish about prospects for the year as a whole, pointing to a record order book.

Ibstock aims high with £160m deal for Redland Bricks

By CLARE STEWART

IBSTOCK, the buildings materials group, is set to become the biggest brickmaker in the United Kingdom after agreeing to buy Redland Bricks for £160 million. The move will give Ibstock around 35 per cent of the market, putting it ahead of Hanson, the current market leader.

Ibstock is funding the deal with a rights issue that will raise £100 million via a two for three issue, with shares priced at 55p. The deal still has a significant hurdle to overcome in satisfying the Office of Fair Trading on competition grounds. The company's cautious attitude to this is reflected in the structure of the rights issue, allowing shareholders money to be repaid if the acquisition is blocked.

Ian Maclellan, chief execu-

tive, said: "We want to be able to outgun Hanson." He called it an "exciting and challenging deal". The opportunity to acquire Redland Brick comes in the wake of Redland's restructuring. It is Ibstock's second major acquisition — last year it bought Tarmac's brick businesses for £71 million.

Redland Bricks showed an operating profit of £8.9 million last year. The deal will enhance Ibstock's geographical coverage of the market.

Mr Maclellan said that there were also opportunities to make substantial cost savings and rationalise to improve efficiency, which may mean closure of some older brick factories over time and job losses. No specific plans will be outlined until the OFT makes its attitude clear.

The Tarmac acquisition last year helped to lift Ibstock's pre-tax profits by 83 per cent, to £26.1 million, on turnover ahead 19 per cent to £250 million. Earnings per share rose by 80 per cent, to 6.67p, and the total dividend for the year is 2p.

The current financial year has made a less impressive start. Ibstock says that demand for building products is slower. Its US business was also hard-hit by bad weather, while the Forest Products division, which saw profits double last year, is being squeezed by the falling price of wood pulp.

These factors will hit first-half profits but the group is "cautiously optimistic" that demand for bricks is set to improve. Shares in Ibstock closed up 11.5p at 85.5p.

Kingfisher chief nears £1m a year

SIR Geoffrey Mulcahy, chief executive of Kingfisher, nearly rejoined the £1 million-a-year club last year with a 5 per cent jump in total pay to £999,000 in the year to February 3.

Sir Geoffrey and Jim Hodgkinson, chief executive of B&Q, Kingfisher's DIY chain, have moved from three-year contracts to two-year contracts.

According to the annual accounts, the rise in Sir Geoffrey's total pay was mainly due to £226,000 paid under the group's long-term bonus scheme. Last year, he waived his right to £178,306. Kingfisher recently announced a 27 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £312 million, in spite of a 33 per cent drop in profits from B&Q.

Sir Geoffrey's pay in the previous year was £949,000, down from £1.31 million in the year to January 3, 1994.

DFS beats housing gloom with 16% rise

By SARAH BAGNALL

DFS, the cash-rich furniture group, shrugged off the ill effects of a lacklustre housing market and abysmal weather with a 16 per cent leap in pre-tax profits to £15.1 million in the six months to January 27.

Sir Graham Kirkham, founder and executive chairman, said the company "continues to perform exceptionally well, again achieving record profits in a difficult trading environment". Sales from the group's 32 stores rose 19.1 per cent to £87.7 million; like-for-like sales advanced 8.6 per cent.

Sir Graham said: "I am particularly pleased that we have been able to maintain such good progress, despite little improvement in the housing market and in the face of the worst retailing weather conditions for many years."

Since the half year, two new stores have been opened. During the rest of the year, the group plans to open a further

four, including its first stores in London and the South East. Sir Graham said: "The factor that dictates our performance is the volume of people. The number of chimney pots in the South East is far greater than anywhere else and there are more of the type of people who shop in our stores." He sees potential for more than 12 stores in the region, and intends to open the first seven as quickly as possible.

Sir Graham is upbeat about prospects. "I look forward to reporting continuing growth and success," he said. The group ended the first half with cash balances of £23 million, after capital expenditure of £4.9 million and last November's special dividend of £10.4 million.

The dividend was lifted 17 per cent to 3.1p and is payable on June 20 out of earnings of 9.59p a share, up from 8.27p last year. The shares fell 3p to 510p.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARKE

Speculators smarting after power bid vetoes

CITY speculators were trying desperately to repair the damage done to their profit and loss accounts caused by the Government's decision to block the two power bids earlier this week.

One late running story suggested that Southern Company, the US utility, is poised to launch a proposed bid for National Power and will stage a dawn raid at the start of business this morning. It is a move that would help the speculators out of a hole, but smacked more of wishful thinking. The power generators continued to lose ground, with National Power down another 8p at 550p, after briefly touching 534p, and PowerGen 17p off at 555p.

Only last week, there was talk that Southern Company was prepared to bid upwards of 700p a share for National Power, valuing the company at more than £3 billion. But that was before the Government stepped in to block its bid for Southern Electric, up 1p at 835p, and PowerGen's offer for Midlands Electricity, 17p dearer at 385p.

Elsewhere, National Grid eased 3 1/2p to 198p amid claims that Hanson may be looking to dispose of its 12 per cent stake which it acquired along with Eastern Group. It is estimated the sale could raise up to £500 million.

Brokers say that prices among the power generators are likely to remain volatile in the short term, but suggest that falls among the distributors have been overdue. Among the other regional electricity companies, gains were recorded in East Midlands, 11p to 629p, London, 15p to 822p, Seaboard, 12p to 550p, and Yorkshire, 8p stronger to 834p.

The rest of the equity market showed signs of halting the slide of the past few days with the help of the latest retail sales numbers, which offered hope that there may still be scope for another cut in interest rates. It enabled the FT-SE 100 index to claw back a near 15-point deficit, to finish 1.7 points up on the day at 3,819.3. Turnover was 862 million shares. This was in spite of another sharp fall for the Dow Jones average in early trading on Wall Street.

A first-quarter setback accompanied by a profits warning left ICI nursing a fall of 24p at 926p. Pre-tax profits were down almost 10 per cent



Wickes shares fell 9p after a profits warning

at £223 million, reflecting a slowdown in industrial chemicals where volumes in Europe, alone, fell by per cent. Hopes that the group would use its spare cash to pay a special dividend or initiate a share buy-back were dashed.

Ibstock, the brickmaker, jumped 11 1/2p to 85p after announcing plans to buy Redland's brick-making operation

at £223 million, reflecting a slowdown in industrial chemicals where volumes in Europe, alone, fell by per cent. Hopes that the group would use its spare cash to pay a special dividend or initiate a share buy-back were dashed.

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at £223 million, reflecting a slowdown in industrial chemicals where volumes in Europe, alone, fell by per cent. Hopes that the group would use its spare cash to pay a special dividend or initiate a share buy-back were dashed.

Kleinwort Benson, the broker, has moved its recommendation on Allied Domecq from a "sell" to a "hold". It says a further deterioration in profitability will be needed before the much talked of break-up is undertaken. Kleinwort says that without the benefit of a bid the break-up value would be between 650p and 700p a share.

for £155 million. To help to fund the deal Ibstock is proposing a two-for-three rights issue to raise £100 million. The full-year figures from Ibstock showed pre-tax profits climbing 83 per cent to £26.1 million, accompanied by a rise of one-third in the payout to 2p.

The best gain on the day was seen in Chiroscience, up 117 1/2p at 400p, after the company gave a briefing to bro-

kers. The company told them it had been developing a cancer treatment which it regarded as superior to that of its rivals such as British Biotech and Marimastat. British Biotech added a further 48p at £28.08.

Laporte was also a firm performer, climbing 2 1/2p to 70p. ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, met the company ear-

ly this week and reckons the shares are attractive. There was further speculative buying of Thorn EMI, with the price adding another 2 1/2p at £18.63 as bid talk persisted. Heavy turnover was again recorded in Ladbroke, the takeover favourite, with 16 million shares traded. The price eased 2 1/2p to 203p.

First-time dealings in Millennium & Copthorne Ho-

tels got off to a promising start following a placing at 278p. In early trading the shares touched 329p before ending the session at their best of the day with a rise of 54p at 332p.

Phytopharm also made an encouraging debut following a placing at 175p. At their best the shares touched 185p before ending 3p dearer at 178p.

Rentokil hardened 2 1/2p to 360p as the odds on it winning control of BET continued to shorten. Despite the backing of a number of powerful institutions, brokers take the view that Rentokil's £2.1 billion offer will be accepted by most shareholders. BET closed 1p lighter at 203p.

Wickes, the DIY and builders' supplies retailer, fell 9p to 130p after issuing a profits warning. Harry Sweetbaum, chairman, told shareholders at the annual meeting that first-half profits would fall significantly short of last year's level following bad weather in the first quarter. Business was also being hit by the lack of improvement in the housing market.

Austin Reed firmed 5p to 244p despite the setback for profits last year, which had been widely anticipated. Colin Evans, chief executive, said sales of menswear had risen 8 per cent during the first quarter of the current year.

Elsewhere on the high street, full-year figures from Etam were every bit as bad as feared, with pre-tax profits plunging from £10.67 million to £152,000. The dividend was also slashed. The shares slipped 1p to 164p.

GIIT-EDGED: Prices recovered from a hesitant start with the help of support from overseas investors. Demand was focused at the shorter end of the market, prompting a steepening of the yield curve.

In the futures pit, the June session of the long gilt touched £106 1/2 before ending the session £2 1/2 higher at £106 1/2 as the total number of contracts completed reached 56,000.

In long-term treasury 8 per cent 2015 could only manage a gain of 1/4p at 547 1/2, while at the shorter end treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 3/4p better at £102 1/2.

NEW YORK: The stronger dollar and a desire for fast growth prompted selling of multinationals and an interest in smaller companies on Wall Street. By midday the pressure on the Dow Jones industrial average saw it 39.62 points lower at 5,524.28.

New York (midday): Dow Jones 5524.28 (-39.62) S&P Composite 648.30 (-1.78)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 2220.10 (-51.95)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 10753.38 (-145.31)

Amsterdam: EOE Index 551.33 (-2.59)

Sydney: AO 551.33 (-2.59)

Frankfurt: DAX 2532.41 (-5.88)

Singapore: Straits 2384.75 (+3.57)

Brussels: General 911.80 (-15.83)

Paris: CAC 40 2116.35 (-3.75)

Zurich: S&K Gen 791.70 (-1.98)

London: FT 30 2854.4 (-2.5) FT 100 3019.3 (-1.7) FT-SE Mid 250 4533.3 (+8.8) FT-SE 250 4533.3 (+8.8) FT-SE 100 3019.3 (-1.7) FT-SE All-Share 1914.27 (+2.02) FT Non Financials 2047.15 (+1.83) FT Financials 1123.30 (+0.10) FT Govt Sec 92.73 (+0.04)

Burgundy: SEAO Volume 881.6m US\$ (Dated) 213.61 (+1.51) US\$ 1.51/20 (+0.0008) German Mark 2.311 (+0.0008) Exchange Index 84.3 (+0.8) Bank of England official close (Hpm) 1.2084 ECU 1.064 RPI 151.5 Mar (2.7%) Jan 1987-100 150.9 Mar (2.9%) Jan 1987-100

RECENT ISSUES: Active Imaging 131 - 2 Advent VCT 95 ... British Smaller Co's 95 ... Cambridge Wtr NV 290 - 13 Cap for Co's VCT (100) 95 ... Cardiac (85) 83 - 2 Cliveden (13) 86 + 1 Dicom Group (270) 330 ... Easynet Group (100) 101 + 1 FI Group (235) 334 + 2 Garmore VCT 96 ... Guinness Flight VCT 95 ... Hill Sm UK Emg Cos 97 ... Hurlingham Props 70 ... ILP Group (75) 97 ... Millennium & Cop 332 - 1 Orange (205) 230 - 1 Pacific Horizon Wts 17 ... Pennine AIM VCT 95 ... Phytopharm 178 ... Quester VCT 95 ... Raphael Zorn (32) 105 ... Rebus 105 - 1 Romet 76 + 3 Silver Shield (3) 31 ... Taverniers Trust Uts 517 - 1 Templeton C&E Euro 26

RIGHTS ISSUES: Barrat Dev n/p (200) 70 - 1 Bernose n/p (325) 65 ... Benson Group n/p (40) 11 ... Cap Reg 675% ULS n/p 5 ... Estates & Gen n/p (60) 8 ... Flare n/p (150) 8 ... Guinness Peat n/p (30) 6 ... Indell Control n/p (100) 1 ... Tepnel Life n/p (40) 28 + 1 Tottenham Hot n/p 40

MAJOR CHANGES: RISES: Frost Group 144p (-17p) Rascal Elect 240p (-12p) Corcoran 399p (-11p) FALLS: Filtronic Ccm 385p (-28p) ICI 826p (-25p) BT Airways 540p (-11p)

Closing Prices Page 31

TEMPUS Room at the top

HAVING amassed a huge mound of bricks, Ibstock was dancing on the top of the pile yesterday, claiming that it was bigger than anyone and could now oust Hanson. Fortunately for Ibstock, the share market paid no attention to the boast. Had anyone believed that the company was about to lob a few bricks through Hanson's windows, investors would have fled in panic. Recovery in brick prices has been a painstaking process and major producers voluntarily shut down kilns last winter in a sluggish housing market.

Ibstock has no intention of picking a fight with Hanson. On the contrary, the City is assuming that future relations between the two companies, which together will control some 70 per cent of the UK market, could be quite cosy.

In a business dogged by high fixed costs,

producers need to run plant at high rates of utilisation. After a shakeout of administration and sales staff, Ibstock will spend money fine-tuning production, closing a few kilns while upgrading others to tweak up its margins. With such large market shares, a duopoly of Hanson and Ibstock will find it easy to tailor production to market demand. In some areas, Ibstock could control almost half the brick market.

The share market wants to believe that the enlarged Ibstock will not arouse the concern of the Office of Fair Trading. Ibstock's rights issue is structured to allow the money to be repaid, but the company knows the OFT's mind well, having consulted the regulator over the purchase of the Tarmac bricks business last year. Ibstock may have shed a few more kilns, but that would not spoil its victory.

ICI

SUCH a head of steam was built up over share buy-backs on Wednesday that ICI shares had only one way to go on yesterday's quarterly figures. The chemical company did not oblige investors expecting a dollop of extra cash from the company and the share price reversed all of the previous day's gains.

Of more importance was the news that the company expects the second quarter to continue the downward trend of the first three months, during which ICI's industrial chemicals business suffered a sharp fall in volumes. Most of the bad news came from Europe, where volumes fell 9 per cent in the first quarter, explaining the lag in reducing inventories.

ICI confidently predicts a 2 per cent growth in its volumes worldwide in the current year.

Trinity Holdings

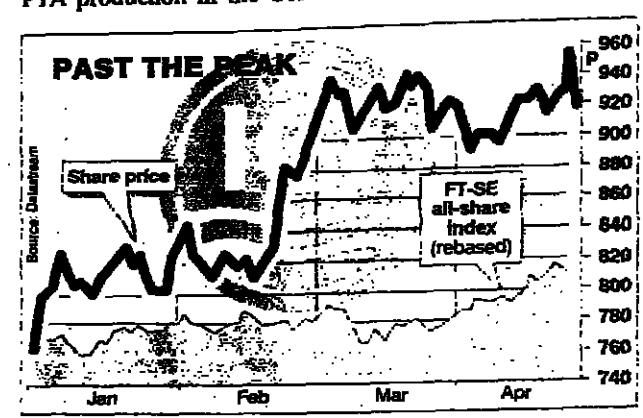
SPECIALIST vehicle-maker Trinity Holdings rode a boom in bus building to record profits last year. Although that market has peaked, Trinity is successfully building alternative businesses that will keep the company on the growth path.

Trinity shares took a tumble yesterday, after the company's cautious words about the outlook for the first half. But the problems outlined yesterday appear short-term. The integration of the new airport businesses will result in a charge this year but all three are profitable and the restructuring will place Trinity in a strong position in a growing market.

Trinity is also continuing to face teething problems with its Malaysian bus-building business. In the immediate future it will generate lower margins than the mature operations in the UK.

compared with last year's solid 3 per cent. However, the setback in the first quarter and slow advances in the second suggest a brisk pace will be needed in the rest of the year.

It therefore scarcely surprising that ICI is holding back a £150 million investment in expanding PTA production in the UK.



But a steady penetration of the Malaysian market will enable Trinity to take advantage of the growing opportunities elsewhere in the region. The shares are not cheap, sitting on a forward price/earnings ratio of almost 16 times. But Trinity deserves its premium rating and the shares should continue their journey upwards.

Etam

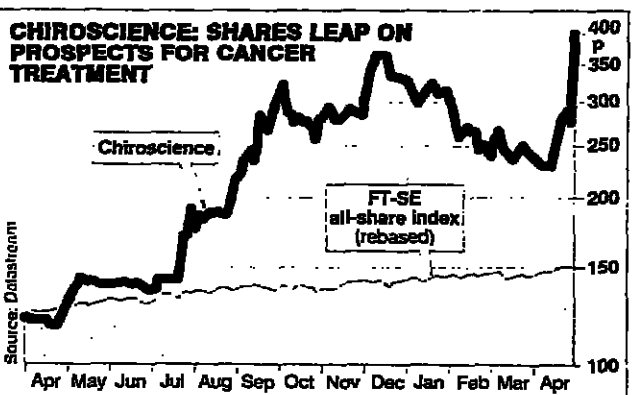
EXPERIENCED retailers know that all fashions come back to haunt us, evidenced by the recycled 1970s gear that fills the shops today. Unfortunately, for Etam, there just is not enough time to wait for ra-ra skirts and other 1980s ephemera to come back into fashion.

Etam is doing its level best to reinvent itself, widening its market to include an older female customer prepared to pay a higher price. The shops used to rely on discounting to shift slow lines of cheap fashionable stuff that would bare-

ly last a season. In the 1980s, retailers could almost dip their hands in customers' pockets to relieve them of surplus cash but consumers today are less malleable.

Yesterday's figures gave little evidence that Etam has found its way. A strategy based on less discounting has left it with more unsold stock and losses in the first half will increase. Having widened its target market, Etam is competing head-on with Next and Dorothy Perkins, two retailers that are cutting a swathe down the high street and even posing a challenge to Marks & Spencer. Fashion retailing is becoming a winner-takes-all business with retailers adopting price positions and then fitting the clothes to the price. In such a game, even the successful find it difficult to make money. Etam has its work cut out to find a niche in this market and even bidders may be wary.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED



COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COCOA

May	1020-1022	1001-1009
Jul	1025-1027	1006-1014
Dec	1077-1079	1056-1064
Mar	1077-1079	1056-1064
May	1030-1032	1011-1019
Jul	1035-1037	1016-1024
Dec	1087-1089	1066-1074
Mar	1087-1089	1066-1074
May	1040-1042	Volume: 11663

ROBUSTA COFFEE (lb)

May	1995-1999	Jan	1923-1927
Jul	201-203	Apr	1928-1932
Dec	1995-1999	May	1935-1939
Mar	1995-1999	Jun	1940-1944
May	1995-1999	Jul	Volume: 6745

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

May	36.5-37.0	Mar	35.5-36.0
Jul	36.5-37.0	Apr	35.5-36.0
Dec	36.5-37.0	May	35.5-36.0
Mar	36.5-37.0	Jun	35.5-36.0
May	36.5-37.0	Jul	Volume: 1405

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

Average livestock prices at representative markets on April 24

lb/kg live	lb/kg live	Cattle
100-100	100-100	100-100
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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Long run south for savers

KEN CULLEY, the defender-in-chief of building society mutualism, lays claim to the ultimate carpetbagging brag. The Portman, the Top 20 building society, recently opened accounts for a claustrophobic carload of "savers" who had driven doggedly from Glasgow to their nearest branch in Birmingham.

With their fingers crossed all the way, the passengers are convinced that the Portman is the next society to be taken over. According to Ken: "They should have built Hadrian's Wall higher."

Loyalty pays

LOYAL Railtrack chairman Bob Horton is a figurehead for old-fashioned values. Not surprising then that Simmons & Simmons, the law firm that came through Railtrack's beauty parade process with the lion's share of the advisory work on the flotation. It was, if you remember, Simmons & Simmons who negotiated Horton's £153 million pay-off when he was booted out of the top job at BP in 1992.

Each-way bet

THE oldest and second largest investment trust, Foreign & Colonial is waving both political colours in its run up to the forthcoming election. The controversial matter over the company's £25,000 donation to the Conservative Party — double the usual donation this year due to the election — will be put to the vote at today's AGM. However, Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, has been invited to speak at F&C's Need for Growth in Emerging Markets conference next month.



"I think we're with the Woolwich, but we might be with the Pru"

THE cost-cutting BBC has caused a storm over its decision to raise the price of a cuppa from 14p to 20p. From May 6, food and drink prices rise 12 per cent, inciting staff to write irate letters to the staff magazine Ariel. What a ploy, when the BBC has one of the best value watering holes in town.

Training daze

STAFF at NCU Mutual Insurance Society are polishing their office windows in anticipation of the Scottish football squad's arrival in their backyard this summer. Scotland's manager Craig Brown snapped up the offer to use the Stratford-upon-Avon insurers' magnificent sports facilities, made by Rangers supporter and NCU Mutual managing director, Andrew Young who emphasises that the invasion will not cost his policyholders a thing.

Return trip

A BUMPY ride for RBS Advanta, the Edinburgh credit card company, which recently opened a London office. While packing, planning manager Mark Austin dropped his airline ticket into his office equipment, which was to go by road. Red-faced Austin was at the airport before realising his gaffe. He returned to the office, rescued his ticket from the removal van, and dashed back to the airport.

MORAG PRESTON



Caring environment: in the battle to sell more policies, private health insurers like BUPA have forged links with many NHS-run hospitals

Battle to spread benefits of private healthcare hots up

Marianne Curphey looks at progress in the fight to change perceptions about medical protection

Private medical insurance may be a £2 billion industry but for the insurers, too many prospective clients still regard it as an unglamorous preserve of the wealthy.

As pressure on the health service grows, insurers believe that more people will turn to private cover to obtain speedy or convenient treatment from doctors they trust. They also believe it offers lucrative opportunities to turn a profit. Norwich Union has broken into the black after entering the market, and Legal and General is poised to enter.

Already 11 per cent of Britons have their own healthcare cover, even though they can still obtain free National Health Service treatment.

Insurers see young people as the key to growth. Until now, this group has been reluctant to take out medical protection, believing they are unlikely to need major surgery until middle age. However, BUPA and PPP, the two largest insurers, are attempting to change these perceptions, using loyalty schemes and new products aimed at families, women and active young people.

Faced with an increasingly competitive market and an influx of foreign insurers trying to undercut premiums, Britain's 25 healthcare insurers are keen to take a share of the estimated 4 per cent increase in policyholders over the next few years.

BUPA, with an estimated 46 per cent share, dominates the market, followed by PPP with 28 per cent. William Laing, director of the healthcare market analysts Laing & Buisson, says private medical insurance (PMI) used to be a rapidly growing sector, but slowed early in the 1990s recession and is only now starting to recover.

Mr Laing says BUPA and PPP's main competition has come from Norwich Union, which put substantial investment into its products to build a market share of around 9 per

cent from scratch. WPA is the next largest PMI provider, with 4 per cent; the rest of the market is divided among much smaller players.

Mr Laing believes that far from seeing consolidation, the industry will become ever more fragmented as more and more general insurers see the opportunity in selling PMI and bring out their own products. Competition is eroding BUPA's premier position and during the recession it lost many of its corporate clients as firms cut staff perks to reduce costs. Its loyalty scheme, launched this week, aims to encourage customers to renew their policies every year, and offers incentives to anyone who joins a BUPA-approved health club.

Unlike general insurance, where premiums have fallen by up to 15 per cent in the last few years and competition is so fierce that some underwriters have been selling unprofitable business, medical insurance is still seen as a lucrative area with room for expansion. However, like general insurance, companies selling PMI tend to spend money acquiring new business and only make money when customers renew — their loyalty is essential.



Peter Owen, left, of PPP, and Peter Jacobs, of BUPA

switch insurers, even though it might be in the customer's best interest to stay put. The OFT is due to make its findings public next month.

BUPA has one million personal customers and two million more clients under corporate schemes. It operates 29 hospitals in the UK and has links with 800 more, including NHS institutions. Unlike PPP, which is about to float, BUPA says it is committed to keeping its provision status. Peter Jacobs, BUPA's chief executive, sees no reason to bring BUPA to the stock market "in the next five years". He said: "We do not need extra capital and the company is financially sound. We have reserves of £565 million and the advantage of being a provident institution is that the money we make can be reinvested in healthcare."

PPP, meanwhile, recognises that the PMI market is "fiercely competitive". Having supported the relaunch of its brand with prime-time television advertising, PPP says it now has ambitions to grow its market share. Rather than introduce a loyalty scheme similar to BUPA's, it is concentrating on promoting the benefits of its 24-hour health line, which is staffed by nurses who can advise policyholders on medical matters. It is also marketing its healthcare product to active young people who do not need major surgery but who often need physiotherapy for sports injuries.

BUPA's loyalty scheme involves a system of credits for customers who renew policies each year. These credits, which have no monetary value, can be exchanged for healthcare benefits. Policies are cancelled if the policyholder misses a premium or stops the plan.

BUPA's other new move is to encourage policyholders to join an approved health club in return for membership discounts. BUPA has created links with a network of 240 health and fitness clubs through the Fitness Industry Association, and members are offered 20 per cent off the joining fee. Members of fitness clubs can apply for discounts of up to 15 per cent on private medical insurance and health screening. BUPA is happy to admit that this is a move towards keeping customers healthier and, therefore, less likely to make a claim.

Peter Jacobs described it an incentive scheme, and not compulsory: "We're not going to take a Big Brother attitude, he said. "We do not feel it is our place to make people go to the gym every week, but we do feel preventive medicine has an important role to play in the well-being of our clients. In the long run, it is better for them and cheaper for us."

In addition, BUPA is setting up a surgeons' charter, which will effectively deliver higher volumes of patients to hospitals and surgeons who keep within its recommended prices. The insurer is concerned that private medical practitioners are charging too much for certain treatments and that many operations need not be undertaken.

When Peter Jacobs arrived in 1991, BUPA losses were £38.2 million. The latest returns covering 1995 show a surplus of £99.2 million, while PPP's pre-tax profits for 1995 was £32.2 million.

BUPA's other new move is to encourage policyholders to join an approved health club in return for membership discounts. BUPA has created links with a network of 240 health and fitness clubs through the Fitness Industry Association, and members are offered 20 per cent off the joining fee. Members of fitness clubs can apply for discounts of up to 15 per cent on private medical insurance and health screening. BUPA is happy to admit that this is a move towards keeping customers healthier and, therefore, less likely to make a claim.

BUPA's other new move is to encourage policyholders to

The companies going for gold at the Olympics

Ian Brodie explains why Coca-Cola will spend \$650 million on the games

THE Olympic Torch Relay will tomorrow embark on an 84-day run across America. The Coca-Cola Company and other sponsors are confident the runners' path is paved with gold.

For although opening ceremonies for the Atlanta Olympics do not begin until July 19, the International Olympic Committee is already working closely with its corporate patrons. The flow of private money is now so important that the IOC and the Atlanta organisers have put aside \$10 million to counter-attack any "parasite" firm that implies in its advertising that it is an Olympic sponsor when it is not.

Coke is the Official Presenter of the relay and, in part-exchange for its investment of \$12 million, has chosen a quarter of the 10,000 runners from candidates suggested by Coke drinkers around the world.

The relay's progress through 1,300 towns across 42 states amounts to a continuous, rolling commercial. At each festive stop, Coke will be served, Coke signs will be up, and Coke will control sales of pins, jackets and other relay merchandise. The escorting caravan will drive BMW cars using Texaco petrol, stay at Holiday Inns, wear Champion sportswear, use Motorola cell phones, and fly on Delta Airlines — all relay sponsors.

Coca-Cola insists that even with all its promotion and advertising the relay will be tastefully done. "I think people will be pleased by the purity and thoughtfulness of the way it's presented," said Stu Cross, director of worldwide sports for the soft drink group. The runners themselves will wear no corporate logos.

The relay is a warm-up for Coca-Cola's huge sponsorship during the games which will be held within sight of the company's Atlanta headquarters. The company has built the first Olympic theme park in the centre of the city.

Disc jockeys will be flown in from around the world, including Capital Radio in London, to broadcast from the park. Britain's winning entry for Coke-inspired folk art, combining Coca-Cola bottles and Stonehenge, was designed by Brian Ander-

son, a sculptor from Dyfed. He has won £5,000 and a trip to the games.

Coca-Cola will spend a reported \$650 million on the Olympics, half its advertising and marketing budget for the year. Executives are satisfied that their long association with the Olympics pays off in enhanced corporate image, social contribution and increased sales globally.

The company has paid \$40 million to be a worldwide sponsor along with nine others: Visa, Kodak, Time magazine and Sports Illustrated, Panasonic, IBM, Xerox, Bausch and Lomb optical products, John Hancock Insurance and United Parcel Service.

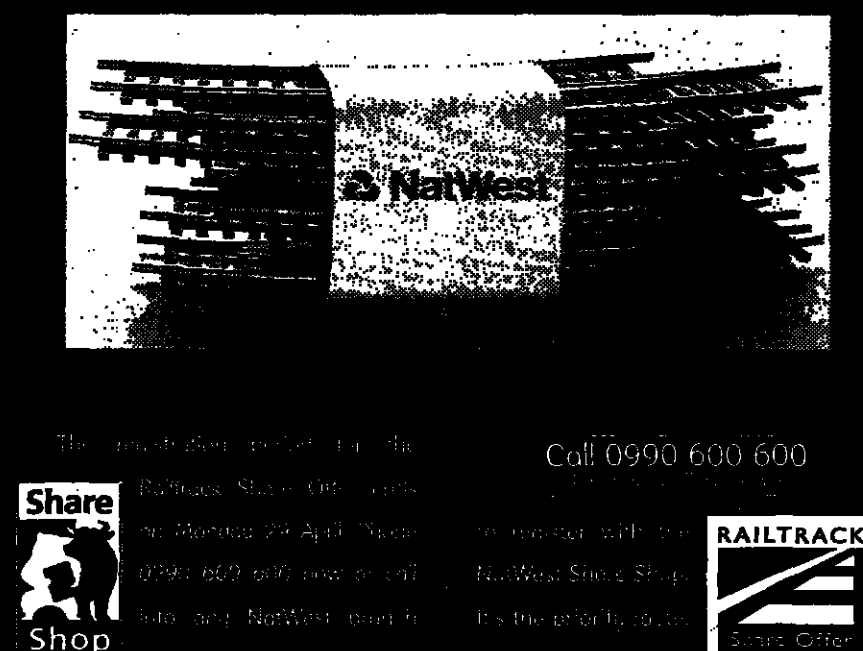
Below this top ten are progressively less expensive tiers of Olympic benefactors known as partners, national sponsors, suppliers and licensees. The list includes an employment agency, three brands of vehicles, an air-conditioning firm, even two television quiz shows.

Few sponsors pay their obligation totally in cash. Most contracts involve a barter system for goods and services. For example, Dial will deliver 300 tons of soap, deodorant, shampoo and Brillo pads to the Olympic villages.

Not everyone is convinced that the Olympic connection pays off. Obtaining rights to the five-ring Olympic symbol is only the start. It takes costly advertising to capitalise on a firm's commitment. Federal Express dropped out after 1988, saying the investment did not work for them. 3M reached the same conclusion in 1992. But the withdrawal of American Express after 1984 is now seen as a mistake.

Visa stepped in, convinced that credit cards were exactly the type of universal service to benefit from being part of the Olympic action. Now only Visa can be used to buy tickets to the games, or at the venues, and the company reckons its Olympic link is worth a 7 per cent increase in profits. John Bennett, marketing director for Visa International, said: "Our tracking studies found that those five rings make customers feel better about you as a company and about your product."

Don't be side tracked.



NatWest
More than just a bank

Share Shop
Call 0990 600 600
RAILTRACK
Share Order

End to RPM will hit community

From S. G. Tanna
Sir, Asda's corporate counsel may be of the opinion that resale price maintenance (RPM) on non-prescription medicines is "an outdated piece of junk law" (April 17). What he has not considered is the potentially devastating long-term effect that the abolition of RPM will have on our local community pharmacies.

The removal of RPM will force the closure of many smaller, independent pharmacies who will be unable to compete with the supermarkets. Consumers will, therefore, have less access to the wide range of services — from dispensing to health care advice — offered by the pharmacist, which will hit the most vulnerable particularly hard. We are moving towards an age of responsible self-medication and, as such, the local pharmacist will be playing an increasingly important role in primary healthcare. The loss of your local pharmacy is a high price to pay for cheaper medicines, Mr Norman.

Yours faithfully,
S. G. TANNA,
Director,
Hepole Ltd,
Dispensing chemist,
398 Dedworth Road,
Windsor, Berkshire.

Journey back in time with the RAC

From J. A. G. Stonehouse

Sir, I refer to your article "GRE poised to buy RAC's insurance broking side" (April 19). To say that the RAC "has been offering motor insurance for more than 20 years" is something of an understatement. Prior to 1948 RAC policies were offered on behalf of the RAC by two Lloyd's brokers, Muir Beddall and Robt. Bradford. In 1947 they formed a jointly owned company, Beddall Bradford, which by agreement with the RAC devoted its activities entirely to the provision of insurance facilities for members of the RAC with policy wording approved by the RAC and an arbitration clause by the RAC in the event of dispute. Initially the policies were underwritten at Lloyd's but subsequently the panel was enlarged to include various insurance companies.

This precedes most of the present competitors. In the early days the RAC-approved policies provided a quality product at a price below the then motor tariff and in the 1960s and 1970s a safe refuge when the cut-price insurers collapsed. (Remember the Fire Auto & Marine and the Vehicle & General?)

Beddall Bradford was acquired by the RAC in 1984. Yours faithfully,
J. A. G. STONEHOUSE
(formerly chief executive
Beddall Bradford & Co Ltd),
Elm Lodge,
43 Upper Tilehouse Street,
Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

Comfort conflict

From Mr Denis Christian

Sir, I have just heard Sir Alastair Morton, Eurotunnel's co-chairman, say that he is "comfortable" with the loss of £925 million during the first year of operation. One trusts that countries, peoples, shareholders and banks are equally comfortable and that Sir Alastair has a comfortable retirement in October.

Actually, I am more concerned about the misuse of the English language, and that such leaders of industry should see "comfortable" and "ashamed" as synonyms. Yours faithfully,
DENIS CHRISTIAN,
37 Swanscombe Road,
Chislewick,
London W4.

Simple solution that will give shareholders a greater say at AGMs

From Ralph Instone

Sir, There is a simple solution, which I have already suggested to the DTI, to the problem (Graham Searjeant, April 20) of giving shareholders a greater say at AGMs without

derogating from directors' responsibilities.

All voting shareholders should be given a statutory right to raise any matter at the AGM on giving not less than, say, three days' prior notice to the company, whether or not

the matter falls within the scope of the circulated agenda. Companies should be obliged to append a note to this effect to the notice convening the meeting, like the note at present required about voting by proxy.

Yours faithfully,
RALPH INSTONE,
18 Fairacres,
Roehampton Lane,
SW1.

Letters to the Business and Finance section of The Times can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

Figure 1

Figure 1 shows two panels illustrating the relationship between the number of children and the probability of having a child. The top panel displays the estimated probability of having a child (Y-axis) against the number of children (X-axis). The bottom panel displays the estimated probability of having a child (Y-axis) against the number of children (X-axis).

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Fierce rivalry has cleaned up the mobile phone market. David Hewson introduces a three-page report with a guide to the best deals

Cutting the jargon and the bills

Private consumers may be turning to mobile phones in ever greater numbers (despite several cellphone radiation scares, each of them instantly denied by the industry), but the market has changed a lot in the last year. It has matured.

Twelve months ago most people were baffled by the jargon and won over by cheap or even free handsets. The cost of joining the mobile phone revolution never seemed so low, until the bills arrived.

Today we are wiser, and the mobile phone networks know it. Eye-catching deals that disguise the real cost of ownership are disappearing. No one is fooled.

Much of the momentum for this change has come through the success of Orange, the all-digital network owned by Hutchison Telecom and British Aerospace. Launched in 1994, with a baffling

name and a big advertising campaign, Orange had a slow beginning, but now has 500,000 subscribers. Vodafone and Cellnet are still bigger, but they have a decade's start on the new-comer and a back-log of older users hooked onto analogue systems. Mercury's One2One subsidiary also had a short start on Orange, but is probably now in fourth place, and some way behind on geographical coverage.

Over the years, we have been plagued by complex tariffs, with different rates for a variety of phone calls and services. New mobile users find it hard to predict their phone usage, making it almost impossible to choose with any great degree of accuracy the best airtime package. And if you get your sums wrong, changing to a better tariff could be expensive.

What Orange did was to ignore the idea of discounting handsets and concentrate on a bundled airtime deal. The handset will probably cost at least £50, depending on the model, but the airtime deal is straightforward and flexi-

ble. One of the most popular schemes, which costs £25 a month plus VAT, includes 60 minutes in calls, after which you pay a flat sum per second.

The success of Orange has persuaded Vodafone and Cellnet to follow suit with similar simple bundled tariffs, which for some users can work out cheaper for basic calls. Setting up phone networks is an expensive business. Nobody involved can afford to run at a bargain-basement price for long. Instead of embarking on a price war, networks are more likely to compete on bundled features than on the cost per call.

Choosing a mobile service is, happily, a lot simpler than it was a year ago. Most users now will opt for a digital system, rather than an old analogue one. The voice quality is normally better and the coverage is rapidly becoming comparable.

Beware of dubious coverage boasts, however. Some networks base them on the areas that can be reached by a high-powered, built-in carphone, not the portable handsets most of us use. So check, before you buy, that you really can get good reception in the places where you want to use your phone.

A largely hidden benefit of the digital system is its ability to send and receive data reliably. This means nothing to most domestic phone owners, although a growing number of business users plug their phones into notebooks or personal communicators to send and receive faxes and e-mail.

The biggest drawback to digital data is the cost of the card needed to plug into your PC, which is unlikely to be much below £500. But this will fall, and data services will also start to work directly on the screen of your phone, too.

The networks are quietly working on the idea of delivering e-mail, financial news and even cricket scores straight to your pocket. And when those services arrive, the rush into digital may turn into a flood.

Future phones may deliver e-mail, news and cricket scores



Making headlines: Orange cut tariffs with its digital phone costs

Dial M for mugger, MI5 and the drug merchants

Although crime is still rife within the mobile phone industry, the Government seems reluctant to act. Despite occasional mutterings about legislation, the onus is on the networks and their customers to take action themselves.

It is estimated that 15,000 telephone handsets are being stolen every month. About 6,000 of these are then used to make calls and the costs charged to the loser's bill. Mobile phone crime costs the industry more than £100 million a year, and is said by the police to encourage muggings and support other criminal activities, such as drug dealing. But as long as most phones remain non-digital, life will be easy for the crooks: unencrypted identities can easily be altered.

The Duke of Edinburgh was the most recent royal to discover that analogue phones are far from snuff-proof, and the same off-the-shelf scanner, which recorded his private conversation with a woman in February, can also gather a phone's serial number and code. This identity can be transferred to a stolen mobile, which then operates at the expense of the "cloned" user. Last year saw a 400 per cent increase in cloning, at a cost to the industry of more than £20 million.

If the networks detect unusual activity on a subscriber's account, they will cut off the service; the first the customer will know of this is when his handset fails to respond. However, as Bob Tomalski, editor of *What Cellphone* observes: "This

Phone thefts fund drug rings and other crimes, says Glen Owen



Mobiles: a thieves' paradise

only applies if the crook uses the phone in a significantly different way from his victim. If the customer usually makes a lot of different calls, then it is harder for the networks to detect it."

Aware of the problem, the Department of Trade and Industry set up a study group, which reported last October and suggested, amid a flurry of publicity, that the possession of scanning equipment be criminalised. The Government has seemed reluctant to act. Mr Tomalski calls this non-action: "An utter sham, designed to give the impression that they care while they do absolutely nothing." However, a spokesman for the DTI says: "We are keen to get to grips with the problem, but there are many, perfectly harmless users of the equipment, such as radio hams, and we need to be sure we won't criminalise them."

Instead, the industry is having to put its own house in order. In an attempt to defeat cloning, Vodafone recently introduced the "authentication" system; once a PIN number has been entered into a suitably equipped phone its electronic identity is permanently encrypted, a move that Chris Gent, the company's managing director, calls "a major step forward in the fight against the mobile phone criminal".

Steve Gold, the news editor of *Mobile Fraud and Security International*, is not so sure. "Authentication is a good system, but it has

come rather too late. It is not the case that they can throw a switch and everyone will be protected — only about a third of Vodafone's customers can benefit without upgrading their equipment." He says that such moves stem from the increased competition. "Until now the networks seem to have viewed fraud as an acceptable cost to bear, but as margins fall more and more of these measures are being taken."

In February, the industry launched its most concerted effort yet — a £1 million crime prevention scheme that employs "Swat-style" teams of inspectors to check that dealers are not reconnecting stolen phones on the sly. According to the industry body, the Federation of Communication Services, these inspectors have since found five suspect dealers, who risk losing the trade of the other members in the industry. But it remains to be seen to what extent six inspectors can successfully monitor 10,000 dealers.

Mr Gold observes this self-regulation with interest. "They have to do this because the Government thinks that the networks should have taken measures earlier, when mobiles were launched here in 1985. It was already known from the American trials that cloning would be a problem."

Mr Gold says that even the digital networks are threatened by fraud. Despite the claims of invulnerability, digital encryptions were cracked 18 months ago by Italian hackers, and have since been used by government intelligence services, including MI5. "Anyone with the right hardware and expertise can decipher the digital codes, but it is still more secure because eavesdroppers can't just buy a scanner off the shelf and whizz around the airways. They have to have a specific target in mind."

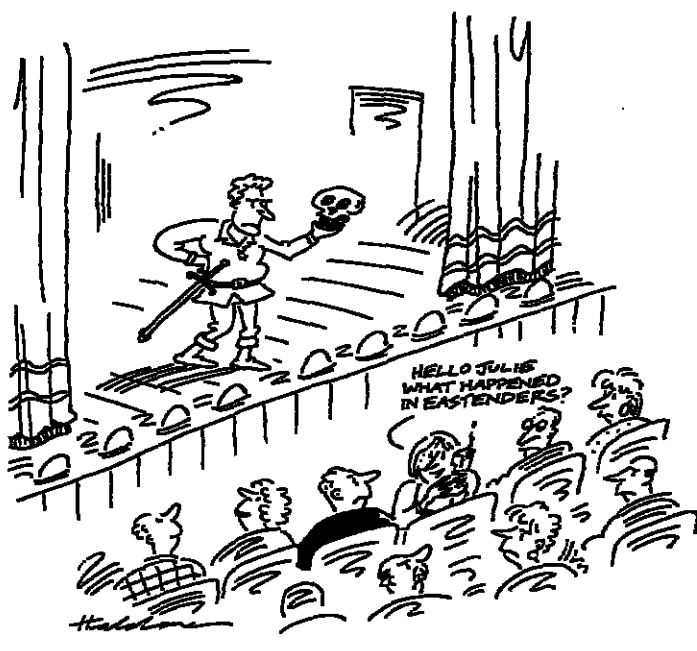
To counter the threat to digital, including that posed by subscription fraud (signing up to a service in somebody else's name), the Orange network has its own team of professional investigators, with the manpower and resources to follow up intelligence from the "anorak" community and the option of carrying a case right through to prosecution.

The police emphasise that much of this crime is due to the carelessness of the owners, who frequently leave handsets on trains, or temptingly on show in their parked cars. They say that even simple measures, such as marking the phones with an ultraviolet pen, would help to track down the crooks.

Can you hear me? I'm at the theatre...

Lovers may love them — but when does a mobile phone call become downright indecent? Should you take one, for example, to church? Or to the opera, theatre or cinema?

Earlier this year Lord Lichfield banned mobile phones from his pleasant shoots. "Frightfully bad manners," he said. Later, after a House of Lords debate on the subject, mobile phones were banned from some Great Western carriages. Recently, the Israeli Army also ordered its conscripts not to carry them when they went in action. For those in doubt, Cellnet's booklet *Mobile Manners: A Guide to Mobile Etiquette* in the '90s, from which the cartoon, right, is taken, may be useful. Ring 0800 424323. More cartoons on page 34.



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hutchison telecom

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Connect to Talk 60 NOW and double your monthly talktime to 120 minutes.

For a monthly charge of £25, the Orange Talk 60 Price Plan usually includes 60 minutes talktime per month. However if you connect to Talk 60 before 2nd June 1996 you'll receive twice the number of free minutes you would normally get until your July bill.

*For up to 3 months.

Tandy

You've got questions. We've got answers

welcome

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BT CMH200 MOBILE PHONE

- Up to 100 minutes talktime/ 22 hours standby time.
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- 15 number memory.
- Speed dial and last number redial.
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HURRY! LIMITED STOCKS

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When you connect to Cellnet Occasional Caller.



Dixons

£9.99
LINE RENTAL PER MONTH FOR LIFE
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Previous line rental £14.99 per month. Call charges of 20p per minute off-peak. 50p per minute peak. Ask in-store for details.

FREE CALLS FOR LIFE

Simply connect to Occasional Caller — opt to pay an extra £2.50 per month and you will receive £6.50 of inclusive calls every month; that's £4 of free calls!

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THIS TARIFF AVAILABLE ON A RANGE OF SELECTED MOBILE PHONES FROM £4.99

There's a great deal going on

345 BRANCHES NATIONWIDE TEL: 0181-200 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST BRANCH

Motorola mr1
Popular flip design. Features 11 hours standby, 60 minutes talk time and 180 number memory. 17-7016

WITH 90% GB POPULATION COVERAGE AND STILL GROWING

Nokia Orange Phone
SAVE £50
£99.99
17-7011

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£49.99
17-7012

Booked by a digital PC

Police are using personal digital notepads in the fight against car thieves. David Hewson reports

Techno-literate car thieves who laughed at the ill-fated launch of Apple's Newton personal digital assistant (PDA) should steer clear of Derbyshire. About 25 Newtons are now on patrol there in the hands of the local police.

The PDAs plug straight into a digital mobile phone and will dial through to the national police computer network, which has the registration numbers of suspect cars. Faster than the average personal computer can connect to a conventional dial-up network, the Newtons will flash back the name of the owner and whether the vehicle has been reported stolen.

Before long it could be doing the same with descriptions of suspects, or even photographs, as part of a national portable information network based on a marriage of PDAs and digital phones.

Most of us remember the Newton as an idea that was met with ridicule because of the shaky way the little device tried, and usually failed, to interpret your handwriting. But it has been growing in stature over the past year, and Britain is proving a remarkably fertile place for it to thrive since we have some of the best-developed digital phone networks in the world.

For technical reasons, data is difficult and unreliable on old-fashioned analogue mobile-phone networks. On digi-

tal, its natural format, electronic data is faster and more reliable, with speeds of 9,600 bits per second, equivalent to a low to mid-range PC modem. These are early days for PDAs, however, and no one is quite sure exactly what kind of device different markets require. What suits a corporate business user, dialling into a sales database, is unlikely to appeal to the consumer who just wants to keep check on share prices and messages.

A very popular PDA is the Psion Organiser, which takes a conventional approach to portable information. It is essentially a small computer, with a tiny screen and keyboard and built-in writing, financial and communications applications.

You can share information on the Psion with your desktop PC, then take it on the road in your pocket. Like almost all new portable devices launched by manufacturers ranging from Hewlett-Packard to Sharp, the Psion has what is known as a PC card slot. This can run a variety of removable devices, from storage cards to the digital data card needed to link your PDA to your phone.

You can pay from £300 upwards for the Psion, and another hundred pounds for the Newton. One of the cheapest devices is the Hewlett-Packard OmniGo 100, which can be found for less than £300. Later this year, Hewlett-Packard will launch a more



Police are using PDAs to check the numberplates of cars they suspect are stolen

upmarket model, the OmniGo 700, which fits directly onto a Nokia GSM phone, without the need for a data card, but it is expected to retail at a hefty £850 or so, plus VAT.

Perhaps the most difficult task in choosing a PDA for mobile communications is judging the software. Some is, frankly, rather poor and too technically demanding for the lay user. Apple found that a big drawback of the original Newton was its communications software. It has been

rewritten for the latest version of the Newton operating system, which was released to acclaim at the end of last year.

Now, you can send and receive faxes very easily, and there is a growing library of applications that will fetch your e-mail from a variety of networks, including CompuServe and the Internet. You can even plug in a full-size keyboard and use your Newton as a computer.

Whichever PDA catches your eye, do add up the extras.

You may need extra software for communication, managing contacts and appointments. Most users will also need to synchronise information between a desktop PC and PDA.

Again, the quality varies, so shop around, see it in action, and accept that the PDA-wielding road warrior is a pioneer in these digital waters. Whatever you buy today will look a little dated a year hence, but you can have a lot of fun and value out of your purchase in the meantime.

How to ensure that you can be reached anywhere

Mobile phones have long given us the possibility of having one telephone number, regardless of which telephone we use. But a mobile is more expensive, there may be reception problems and some batteries won't cope with heavy use. So mobiles are usually turned on only when their owners do not have access to stationary and cheaper telephones.

According to the companies selling them, the answer is a single phone number that can be switched automatically, using a PIN number on a touch telephone, from phone to phone. The system can also be set up automatically, sending calls made to a personal number to different phones as needed.

Personal numbers are also being sold as "lifetime" numbers, where people moving house or businesses moving premises no longer need to change their telephone number. This started to become a reality after the changes made on Phoneday, which allowed OfTel to release a new 07 prefix for personal numbering. Vodafone, for example, acquired the rights to the prefix 07000, and Flextel offers a similar service.

However, this system also costs more money. Subscribers to 07000 numbers pay £120 to buy the number, plus

Call for personal numbers



Thomas: high premiums

£3 a month. Possibly more daunting is that callers to the number have to pay higher call charges: 14p a minute during peak times and 8p a minute off peak. Long-distance charges made to an ordinary telephone number are 8p a minute peak rate, 5p a minute off peak and only 1p a minute for BT local off-peak calls.

If a personal number call is diverted to a mobile or, as will soon be possible, to a phone in another country, the subscriber again pays

extra. The predictions are that these personal number charges could drop, but for the moment many will balk at the rates.

For companies, a personal number does not need to be attached to an individual. Customer service operations, for example, can automatically have calls switched between different employees at preset times.

Because personal numbers use different prefixes, a whole range of new numbers are available. Businesses are moving in on the possibilities of having a memorable number and, with the restoration of letters on modern phones, the ability to use words as well.

Geremy Thomas is managing director of The Personal Number Company, one of three that is selling numbers using Vodafone's 07000 prefix. He says six out of ten numbers are specially chosen, and a quarter of those people are interested in the words that the numbers come at a premium. Mr Thomas charges a £350 connection fee and £450 annual subscription for what his company calls platinum numbers. Super-platinum numbers, such as the recently sold 07000 MORTGAGE, are by negotiation only.

MATTHEW MAY

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Will consumers win in the so-called price battle? Annie Turner examines Cellnet and Vodafone's plans to put the squeeze on Orange

Real price cuts — or just a phoney war?

Initially an expensive business tool, cellular telephony is now becoming a mass-market commodity and consumers should benefit from a price war between network operators.

Cellnet and Vodafone plan to ape Orange's per-second billing and to include "free" airtime minutes in monthly subscription charges for digital services. For those who subscribe to the price-war theory, these are viewed as the first salvoes, fired in response to Orange's surprising the market by attracting 50,000 new subscribers in December, double that achieved by Vodafone and 10,000 ahead of Cellnet. It seems that Vodafone rather than Cellnet is

losing customers to Orange. And the defecting subscribers tend to be the higher-spending ones. In September 1993, when Mercury launched its digital service, One2One, Vodafone accounted for almost 55 per cent of the market and Cellnet for 45 per cent. At the end of March, Vodafone's market share is the same as that of Cellnet at around 42 per cent. Orange now holds 8 per cent and has the fastest growth rate. After a spectacular start with free local calls offered, One2One has 8 per

cent, despite launching seven months before Orange in September 1993.

Even so, industry analysts do not regard Vodafone's — or Cellnet's — actions as the start of a price war so much as a gesture to apparent public preferences, designed to maintain their high profit margins. The industry calls Vodafone's new pricing scheme "the Orange squeezer".

Martin Garner, managing consultant for mobile communications with Ovum, a London

company, says that Cellnet and Vodafone "will be watching the next few months very carefully, and if Vodafone finds its move has not been successful in stemming the move to Orange, it will have grounds for concern". But he notes that the two have not tried to undercut Orange (or One2One) but have adopted lookalike service offerings.

Cellnet's scheme promises reductions of up to 30 per cent on bills; Vodafone launched two new packages on April 1. The two's

schemes might not be radical enough. Adam Zoldan, Dataquest's personal communications industry analyst, says: "Many new subscribers were attracted by free connection, no line rental and subsidised handsets, only to receive their first bill which was three times the cost of the phone and they signed off." Towards the end of last year, Mr Zoldan adds, consumers realised there was no such thing as a free phone. So there was a surge towards Orange, which had always put the

realistic costs of running a service ahead of heavily discounting the original cost of the phone, giving the user a good idea of what the bill would be.

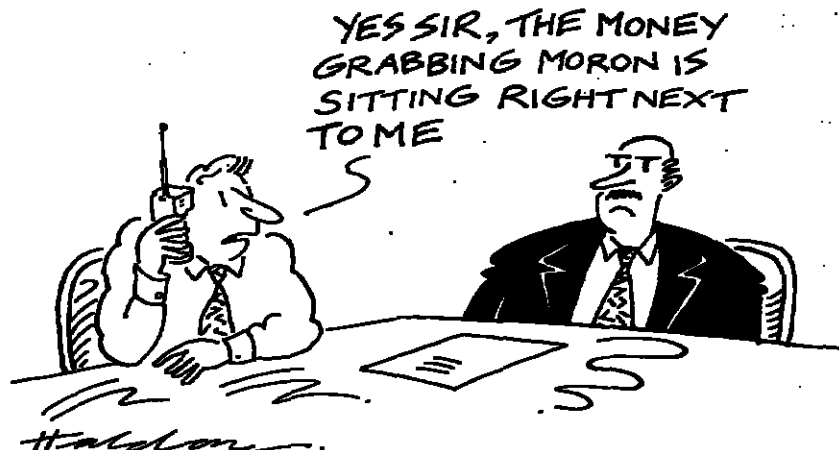
However, it seems there are reasons other than price. The Consumer's Association's *Consumer Policy Review* found that "distortion and dissatisfaction among mobile-phone users are rife, with almost three-quarters (74 per cent) experiencing problems. Almost four out of ten would hand back their mobile, change tariff or

move network tomorrow, if they weren't bound to pay a financial penalty to the service provider."

The report concluded that "among mobile-phone users, the unhappiest and those connected to the Vodafone analogue network".

Areas in which Orange scores better include providing itemised telephone bills as standard and 12 months free insurance on every phone.

The real issues are hidden costs, weasel wording on contracts, excessively high call charges, cancellation penalties, failure to offer trial periods, and misleading advice from those more interested in commission than the customer.



Take a library wherever you go

Jan Schiefer, an engineer at Hewlett-Packard's research laboratory in Bristol, spends a lot of time away from his office. Thanks to his mobile phone, however, he does not fall behind with his e-mail or market data.

Mr Schiefer uses the phone in combination with a portable computer to log in to his office workstation, download e-mail and surf the Internet. "I can dial the World Wide Web to get the latest research information or market surveys," he says. "It's like having a library with you wherever you go." The only drawback, he says, is that the Internet connection can take a minute or two.

More and more people are using mobile phones for data communication as well as voice, transmitting everything from e-mail and faxes to spreadsheets, word-processing files, graphics and slide presentations. The Mobile Data Association believes that 100,000 people will begin using mobile data this year.

One reason for the recent growth is that digital systems, such as PCN and GSM, have become reliable enough for data. Another attraction is price. Short Messaging Services (SMS), for example, allows you to send a few words to mobile handsets for a few pence. Doing the same thing on a mobile voice-mail service

Jane Bird on sending and receiving data by phone

costs at least 50p by the time the caller has paid to leave the message and the recipient has paid to collect it.

Using a portable computer with a mobile phone is rather more expensive because you have to buy a £500 card to go into your computer. "It might take you five minutes to convey 500 or 1,000 words in speech," Kevin Farquharson, principal consultant at Mobile Business Systems, a London-based consultancy specialising in mobile data, says. "With fax or e-mail you could send the same information ten to 50 times faster." An A4 page takes one second to transmit.

The other main reason for mobile data's popularity is that businesses are beginning to use it for a host of applications such as order-processing, human resources, time-reporting and the tracking of service or delivery staff. Many organisations are now giving staff a mobile phone and a data card for their portable computer. If the member of staff moves house or resigns, the equipment can be moved or returned.

Businesses that want mobile data do have another option — they can buy a device that works exclusively for data. These have been around for some years and tend to be used by organisations that have a large number of field staff, such as engineering services companies or couriers. Andy Bird, managing director of Securicor Datatrak, which provides a data-only service, says it can be more cost-effective than combined voice and data because staff can't run up huge phone bills. "Around 80 per cent of calls to service engineers, for example, are to find out where they are and what they're doing," Mr Bird says. "Using voice for this kind of thing often means having a 15-minute conversation of which one minute is answering the questions and the rest is about football."

However, mobile phone network providers believe customers want more than data. "People don't just want to send files, faxes and text messages," says Graham Oxbey, head of product marketing at Orange. "They also want to talk about what they've sent. They might want to confirm receipt, discuss the subject matter or get some sort of spoken response. Such people don't want to be forced to choose between data and voice. They want both."



On call for business or pleasure...

On duty: Pimlico Plumbers, above, use Mercury One2One mobile phones to improve their efficiency and to communicate with customers and suppliers. Off duty: the new pocket NEC Foldphone, below, costs £99



How many extras does a phone need?

Annie Turner on what manufacturers plan next

They fall into three categories: those to do with power supply such as batteries and battery chargers; add-ons for using the phone in the car; and those to do with image such as carrying cases, coloured covers and so on.

Mr Westcott says: "Phone users are changing. Younger users want more features. They grew up with personal computers, are not intimidated by technology and enjoy getting the most they can out of any personal device."

There is evidence to suggest that instead of concentrating on more advanced or individual features, manufacturers should concentrate on more fundamental issues. In February, the Consumers' Association published the findings of an extensive survey of mobile users in the UK in the *Consumer Policy Review*. It found that 12 per cent of respondents had had to repair new phones during the past year (unrelated to accidents or misuse), while a further 16 per cent reported that they had needed to pay for repairs to phones that were two, three and four years old.

Battery life is another weakness and something that all

manufacturers are constantly trying to improve. At the end of February Nokia launched the £79 1610 digital phone for use on GSM networks which provides up to seven hours of air time and 200 hours (eight days) of standby time. This is way beyond the capacity of anything else on the market.

Motorola's StarTac phone will be available in the UK later in the year; without any accessories it weighs only 30g and can fit into a jeans' pocket. With the main and auxiliary batteries combined, it offers up to four hours of talk time and 47 hours on standby.

Ericsson's top-of-the-range GSM phone, the GH388, was launched in March and can provide almost five hours of talk time and 80 hours of standby. It can be linked to a portable computer to send e-mail and other data at 9.6kbit/s.

The aim of all manufacturers used to be to produce an ever smaller phone, but optimal small size and weight have been achieved: for example Motorola's StarTac or Sony's phone that folds up to be the same size as a pager.

Martin Garner, managing consultant with London-based Ovum, says: "In the end, the cellular market will be like that for watches today, where you can pay a fiver for one from a garage forecourt or thousands of pounds for a Rolex, depending on what you need and can afford."

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■ OPERA

Graham Vick produces a minor miracle for ENO: a convincing *Fidelio* staging



■ MUSIC

Shaping the course of 20th-century composition: Paul Sacher, modern music's great patron, turns 90

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ MAGIC

Penn and Teller brush up their tricks and their rude humour for a season at Sadler's Wells



■ TOMORROW

How the tuneful duo, Everything But The Girl, found fame and a new sound at the cutting-edge

The simple truth is, it's perfect

Beethoven's only opera may be one of the soaring peaks in the 400-year history of the genre, but it is hideously difficult to bring off in the theatre: the last two Covent Garden productions fell as wide of the mark as the previous one at the Coliseum. But Graham Vick's new staging for English National Opera hits the nail bang on the head time after time and is, along with Peter Hall's Glyndebourne version, one of the most truthful and moving I have seen.

Vick and the conductor Richard Hickox approach the piece for what it is, not for what it has become — especially, since the Second World War, the opportunity for some kind of grand, breast-beating "statement" (for grand, read shallow). But *Fidelio*'s roots are firmly in French *opéra comique*, and it celebrates simple human truths and aspirations. Hickox's brisk speeds for Marzelline's and Jaquino's opening numbers and Vick's sprightly, near-sitcom direction, with Mary Plazas confiding in the audience and Philip Sheffield singing fear-some stage cockney, remind us that we are among very ordinary people, who just happen to run a prison.

When the extraordinary starts to happen with *Fidelio*'s entrance, Hickox's gentle, flowing tempo for the canon quartet scarcely breaks the domestic mood, which the traditional Mahler-adagio approach always does. We slip back to Uncle Rocco's very modern-sounding Gold aria without a hitch. Throughout, Hickox's conducting is the very antithesis of the Furtwängler-Klemperer tradition, fleet and human in scale, so that when the big moments come their effect is redoubled. Beetho-

ven's musical journey from the commonplace to the epic is faithfully charted.

David Pountney's jauntily demotic new translation is all part of the concept: the syntax is as everyday as Paul Brown's contemporary costumes, with warders' uniforms familiar from countless prison movies and the white puttees for the marines striking a more transatlantic note. (The huge cross on which the action is set may be deconstructed according to taste.) Pizarro is no leather-coated fascist monster, but a civil servant in

pin-striped trousers, so very ordinary and hence so very frightening. We are here and now, and any danger of conflict between the present day and the potential fusion of the text is avoided by the speed with which Vick directs the dialogue, and the total conviction he has inspired in the cast. All on stage believe in what they are doing, and so does the audience.

Of course, any *Fidelio* stands or falls by its protagonist, and with Kathryn Harries it not only stands but soars into the stratosphere. Her mezzo-ish instrument does not find the upper reaches of the role easy — many top notes emerge as an act of will — but she turns this to advantage; the very effort required is part of her characterisation, for this Leonore is not the traditional amazon Valkyrie capable of gobbling up four prison governors before breakfast, but a vulnerable woman constantly aware of the danger she is in, constantly having to steel herself to her task.

She made much of that great turning point in the second-act trio when Leonore determines to rescue the prisoner even before she knows it is her husband, the moment when the particular becomes the

■ OPERA

Fidelio
Coliseum



(From left) Kathryn Harries, Gwynne Howell and Mary Plazas in English National Opera's "truthful and moving" modern-dress *Fidelio*

universal — all part of Beethoven's scheme. She phrases the gentler music with innate warmth, and in general suggests that Leonore's natural goodness and unselfishness are the human norm rather than the time-serving ordinariness of all around her.

Anthony Rolfe Johnson sings Florestan with Mozartian grace and near-Wagnerian fullness of tone — perfect. Peter Sidhom's ranting Pizarro and John Connell's Sarastro-like Minister are excellent. Gwynne Howell's bustling, sly Rocco, reeking of false bonhomie and with eyes firmly on the main chance, is one of the best things this fine artist has done.

A well-intentioned but horrible dumbshow in the overture is the only flaw in this marvellous staging — please cut it.

RODNEY MILNES

Paying and playing its way

■ CONCERT

Budapest FO/Fischer
Barbican

THE Budapest Festival Orchestra, first off the mark when private funding and administration became *de rigueur* in post-subsidy Hungary, goes from strength to strength and is now arguably the country's leading orchestra.

As early as 1983, when the players were drawn together by Ivan Fischer and Zoltan Kocsis, the emphasis was on chamber-musical preparation, section by section. Now the players include members of the Kodaly and Eder Quartets, of the Budapest Wind Ensemble and, in the leader's chair, Gabor Takacs, late of the eponymous quartet.

The stark abstraction of Mahler's Sixth Symphony showed the discipline of ensemble and the

wisdom of Ivan Fischer. He is maturing as a conductor of large-scale repertoire, and this performance was one of the most cogent I have ever heard from him.

Despite the symphony's extreme subject-matter (death, plain and simple), it resisted extremes. Fischer chose instead to concentrate detail in the fragile trios, each one drawn into a different level of relief, with the violins, antiphonally placed, distancing the sound as

if from another world. But the unremitting darkness of its vision was powerfully sculpted in a well-paced opening march, hard-edged by percussion and biting angrily at each incisive entry.

By the final march, momentum was inexorable: this vast body of players moved with indefatigable impetus towards those two great hammer-blows. Nothing could follow an act like that; but *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo* by Budapest's own Franz Liszt, had started the evening in a version which contained the composer's final 1854 corrections to a work which had begun as an overture to Goethe's great play.

HILARY FINCH

■ MAGIC

Trick and treat

Penn and Teller
Sadler's Wells

YOU have probably seen these guys on the box. Penn and Teller are the American double act who have injected sick humour into hackneyed conjuring tricks. They hover somewhere between stand-up, magic and the Archaos theory of entertainment.

Penn is the gigantic, garrulous one with the joke-sadistic tendencies. He drags out a mock-disgraceous card trick while his tiny, silent sidekick Teller apparently drowns quietly in a water tank.

This is the first time the so-called gruesome twosome have performed live in this country. Their show, warmly received at Sadler's Wells, has been extended to May 4. Spurts of fake blood get big laughs and "yeuchs" from the audience when a white rabbit is (only seemingly, of course) dropped into an industrial shredder.

There are many surprises and amusing flashes in the course of the evening. Teller swallows needles, then chews on a length of cotton and disgorges the lot miraculously threaded together. As Penn juggles jagged broken bottles, you feel the thrill of simultaneous nerves and admiration. Elsewhere the duo share their trade secrets, replaying in slow motion sleights of hand with a lit cigarette, yet still keeping mystifying tricks up their sleeves.

But if shocking anarchy is the game, this show is quite tame. Penn and Teller are rather sweet at heart. They also cherish their art, tantalising you with levitation, rounding off with fire-breathing.

The more theatrical vignettes are the most thought-provoking. Teller takes a knife to the shadow of a rose and as he stabs, the petals of the real flower fall. On a park bench, a talkative tourist finds himself alarmingly handcuffed to a strange, morbidly unresponsive man. Only when the struggle turns into a hug do the cuffs magically unlock by themselves.

KATE BASSETT

One of the century's most influential patrons is entering his tenth decade

High commissioner of music

On Sunday, Paul Sacher, the Swiss conductor and arts patron, celebrates his ninety-third birthday. Since 1926, Sacher has commissioned more than 200 compositions, which makes his patronage of 20th-century classical music unrivalled. What makes Sacher's contribution as a music patron unique, however, is the degree to which his own musical tastes and accomplishments have influenced the shape of classical music in our century.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Sacher's influence is the dominance of the strings in the works which he commissioned. When he created the Basle Chamber Orchestra in 1926, it was an ensemble based on its string sections.

It was with this ensemble and, after 1941, its Zurich counterpart, the Collegium Musicum Zurich, that commissioned works were to be given their world premieres. Although the musicians from whom he commissioned were "free" in terms of deadlines and styles, they were composing, almost always, for his strings. "I gave them as much freedom as possible," Sacher explained, "but they had to know something about my orchestra."

Similarly, Sacher dislikes played an influential role. There was, for instance, his earlier aversion to the piano. "I never played or learnt the piano — I found it a dreadful instrument," Sacher later admitted. "I much preferred the sound of the organ or the harpsichord." The strength of this preference is evidenced by his persuading Frank Martin to include the harpsichord in his *Petite Symphonie Concertante*, a Sacher commission written in 1944-45.

Music with a strong rhythmic element lay at the heart of Sacher's aesthetic preference. It was one of the major criteria which attracted him to, or turned him away from, the work of individual composers. In the 1920s this drew him to the work of Paul Hindemith, the "bad boy" of contemporary music, and later to composers such as Bartók and Stravinsky. It also led to his never giving commissions to Schoenberg, Berg or Webern.



Criticised in his later years for this neglect, Sacher testily retorted: "I'm not the radio. I don't have to be fair. I took what I felt was the best for me and my orchestra."

Sometimes, though, the influence was more mundane than musical. Occasionally Sacher would request compositions of specific length or nature to fill in a gap or to complete one of his programmes.

His 1965 commission for his Basle Chamber Orchestra of Conrad Beck's *Hornmages* — two pieces for orchestra, was accompanied by a request in a letter that the work should be approximately 15 minutes in length so that it would be suitable to begin a programme of longer works by Henze and Stravinsky.

In addition to these musical considerations, personal elements also shaped the commissions. Sacher sometimes created intense relationships with composers, often involving material support and proximity. Honegger and Martinu were both long-term house guests at Schoenberg, Sacher's Basle country estate, and Bartók composed his *Divertimento for String Orchestra* (1939) in Sacher's holiday chalet in Saanen.

Sacher's vast network of

contacts and resources also had a synergistic influence on compositions. Sometimes these influences were personal, as when Sacher's introduction of Anne-Sophie Mutter to Witold Lutoslawski at a dinner party at Schoenberg led Lutoslawski to request that his work *Chain 2* (dedicated to Sacher) be premiered by her. Sometimes the influences were academic. The creation of the

Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in 1933 sparked the use of material from early music in contemporary compositions, as evidenced by the works of Sven-Erik Bäck.

Lastly, there were the advantages provided by Sacher's vast personal wealth.

After his marriage in 1934 to the Hoffmann-La Roche heiress Maja Hoffmann-Stehlin, Sacher was able to privatise his Basle Chamber Orchestra, thereby ensuring its continued existence. He was then also able to offer composers commission fees. Later, as fees skyrocketed, he could seek composers competitively, at the same time generously supporting his friends and those in need. For instance, in 1945, Sacher received a phone call from Dr Willi Schuh, a close personal friend of Richard Strauss, telling him that the maestro had arrived in Swit-

zerland depressed and impoverished. When Schuh requested that Sacher offer Strauss a commission, Sacher gave him one. Strauss gave him, in turn, his *Metamorphosen*.

As Sacher enters his ninety-first year, by appearing as a guest conductor and giving lectures around the world, his influence on the music of his century continues. He remains active in the pursuit of commissions. Perhaps most importantly, he has created the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basle, where composers, scholars and musicians can interact with the musical material of the 20th century, either to understand better what has gone before, or to inspire music yet to come.

Despite the success of the foundation, however, many would consider Sacher's crowning achievement to be the celebration of the music itself. Beginning in 1924, he introduced and promoted contemporary music to the public at a time when it was generally scorned. He created and inspired the renewal of early music. He personally brought about the creation of hundreds of works in the classical repertoire.

Many would see these actions as befitting some grand scheme, but for Sacher it was always much simpler than that: "As far as a man can think in the future, I did what I thought necessary, and what was possible for me."

LESLEY STEPHENSON



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POP 1

Great music on the Cranberries' *To the Faithful Departed*... shame about the cloying sentiments



POP 2

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THE TIMES ARTS

POP 3

Bob Mould's new album is a dark collection of tunes charged with a desolate set of lyrics



POP 4

The Bluetones share a little of their "air of gentle, joyful abundance" with Caitlin Moran



Weldon traces a novel path

NICK WELDON
Lavender's Blue
(Verge 00102)

IT MIGHT be over-simplistic to suggest that Nick Weldon, piano-playing son of Fay, shares his mother's gift for storytelling. Jazz and fiction have their own rules, of course, though it is worth noting that some years ago, in the days when the Bass Clef club was still open for business, Weldon Jr presented an eccentric musical interpretation of the novel *Puffball*, his mother taking care of the readings.

That venture yielded mixed results: *Lavender's Blue*, on

JAZZ ALBUMS

the other hand, is an unqualified triumph. An absorbing trio set, it combines an offbeat selection of tunes — including *In The Wee Small Hours of the Morning* and Hampton Hawes's *Sonora* — with unfailingly sensitive group improvisation. From the very first track, the bluesy theme of *Mabs and Tucker* (taken from the *Puffball* suite), Weldon resists the temptation to over-embellish the strong melodic lines.

In bassist Andrew Cleynert and drummer Paul Clarvis he has found ideal partners. The Lammas saxophonist Tim Garland also makes a guest appearance, while his colleague Christine Tobin provides scorching vocals on Weldon's title tune. I cannot think of a more enjoyable and artfully sculpted British recording to have come my way in the past year.

JAN GARBAREK
Visible World
(ECM 1558)

NOBODY could have expected *Officium*, the ecclesiastical collaboration with the Hilgard Ensemble, to take off so spectacularly. With this small-group project, the Norwegian saxophonist retreats to the stark, windswept soundscapes we know so well. The skeletal themes — most of which were drawn from original film and ballet scores — are tastefully executed. A sense of *déjà vu* lingers nonetheless.

CLIVE DAVIS

NEW RECORDS: David Sinclair finds Dolores O'Riordan's muse too self-righteous

Slice of Cranberry pious

SINGLE

KULA SHAKER

Grateful When You're Dead/Jerry Was There (Columbia KULACD2)
RECENTLY spotted whipping up a storm on dates with the Presidents of the United States of America, Kula Shaker are a four-piece band from London. Picking up the retro-rock baton carried thus far by Ocean Colour Scene, they run like hell with it on their blazing second single, a two-in-one song called *Grateful When You're Dead/Jerry Was There*.

"If you know your history you will read between the lines," Crispian Mills sings against a fiercely shifting beat, while organist Jay Darlington pastes over the guitar part with the kind of lines not in vogue since the debut albums by Santana and Chicago Transit Authority.

The vexed question of whether or not we have heard all this before pales into insignificance in the face of the sheer barnstorming magnificence of the track. Play it again, man.

ALBUMS

THE CRANBERRIES
To the Faithful Departed
(Island 524 234)

ON A strictly musical level, *To the Faithful Departed* is as good as anything the Cranberries have recorded before. Produced by Bruce Fairbairn, a man more associated with old-school heavyweights such as Aerosmith and Van Halen than with the jangling, indie-pop sound for which the Cranberries are best known, the album has plenty of backbone. On the uptempo single, *Salvation*, and the rampaging *Forever Yellow Skies* it rocks convincingly but without forfeiting the gentler, more wistful side of the group's muse with songs such as *The Rebels* and *Free To Decide*.

However, on a philosophical and spiritual plane there is a pious undercurrent to Dolores O'Riordan's lyrics. "This album is dedicated to all those who have gone before us," she announces in sleeve notes which marry cloying sentiment to a glibly portentous tone. And if her strident, banshee whoop is beginning to grate, so too is the over-literal verse with which she



Sound investment: the Cranberries have turned to stadium-rock producer Bruce Fairbairn

pays respect to her fallen heroes in *I Just Shot John Lennon* and *I'm Still Remembering*, the latter a eulogy to Kurt Cobain ("Yesterday was cold and bare/Because you were not there").

Further solemn pronouncements on the big issues of the day ensue with *War Child* and *Bosnia*, the latter closing the album with a sickly mixture of strings and a child's music box and which could have been a reject from the *Mary Poppins* soundtrack. Always one to wade in where others would tread more cautiously, O'Riordan is still taking the pop-star trip too seriously both for her own, and this album's good.

LONGPIGS

The Sun is Often Out (Mother 551 542)
COULD Longpigs be the new Radiohead? Certainly the Sheffield group's debut album proceeds at the same measured pace and conjures similar extremes of jagged emotion

as those on Radiohead's classic essay in millennium blues, *The Bends*. Which is enough to make this an exceptional album, no matter how the group fares now.

With songs ranging from the dreamy *On and On* to the momentous *Jesus Christ*, the album is built around the craggy guitar chops of Richard Hawley and the pleading vocal acrobatics of Crispian Hunt — a delivery so impassioned that he repeatedly slips into a momentary falsetto like a nervous tic.

A slight Beatles influence

can be detected on *Far*, and the dark, swirling ambience of the music as a whole recalls the twisted glamour of Suede at their most forceful. But this is a trailblazing album that stands proudly on its own terms and hints at even greater things to come.

BOB MOULD
Bob Mould
(Creation CRECD 135)

STILL an inconspicuous personality on the rock landscape, despite a straight run of three Top Ten albums with his now defunct group Sugar, Bob

Mould can be found furiously licking his wounds on this, his third and most deeply personal solo album. "Critically acclaimed and publicly defamed/There's nothing I can say about it/Much less I could do about it," he sings with surprising gusto on *Art Crisis*, one of the more upbeat numbers on a dark collection of tunes freighted with frighteningly desolate, self-lacerating lyrics.

Fuelled by bitterness, exhaustion and an inner turmoil that seems to be the legacy of both a failed relationship and the disintegration of his band ("This one is for me" is his defiant dedication on the sleeve credits), it is an album which makes for distinctly uneasy listening.

Although buoyed by the snappy melodies of *Deep Karma Canyon* and *Fort Knox*, *King Solomon*, it is the violently unhappy sentiments of *Roll Over and Die* and *Hair Slew*, where a horrid screeching sound gnaws into the fabric of the song, which leave the more lasting impression.

ELVIS PRESLEY

Elvis 56
(RCA/BMG 07863 66817)

HIS memory has been subject to some monstrous distortions, but Elvis Presley was the king of rock 'n' roll and here is the reason why. Unlike other compilations from the 1950s, which have tended to cram together vast wodes of hits and/or obscurities, *Elvis 56* offers a more manageable snapshot of Presley's best work in the one year it all came good for him, together with basic information and a stunning booklet of behind-the-scenes photographs by Alfred Wertheimer.

Imagine in 40 years' time listening to a compilation called *Oasis 95*. However dated and familiar the songs might then sound, the vigour and unbridled confidence of the band at that moment would still surely shine through. Presley in 1956 was Oasis to the power of 100, and there is still an unmistakable glory in his performances of *Heartbreak Hotel*, *Hound Dog*, *Blue Suede Shoes*, *Rip It Up*, *Don't Be Cruel* and many others that transcends the dated sound of the recordings and continues to evoke a unique sense of wonder.

It is no coincidence that 1956 was also Year Zero for popular music as we still know and love it today.

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- 2 The Score Fugees (Columbia)
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- 6 The Coming Busta Rhymes (Elektra)
- 7 Urban Hang Suite Maxwell (Columbia)
- 8 Dance Nation Various Artists (Ministry of Sound)
- 9 An Instinct for Detection Lionrock (Deconstruction)
- 10 Lacabincalifornia Pharcyde (Go! Beat)

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Here come the warm jets

Those nice young Bluetones were expecting to fly, but the take-off speed surprised some of their fans

Just sometimes, with the ing in front of Boeing 747s. I wish they'd called it *Expecting to Drive*. Or *Expecting to Walk Through Somewhere Like Depford*.

"The Bluetones' problem is that everyone expects us to be punching each other," Mark Morris, the lead singer, explains. "Cos it's me and my brother in the band, everyone thinks we're going to be like Liam and Noel Gallagher — hitting each other over the head with bricks, and trying to chuck each other in swimming pools. I think my brother's cool — I'm not going to hit him. Unless he's very annoying."

"No, no, no," Scott Morris chimes in. "The Bluetones' problem is that no one realises we have talents in other areas — I, for instance, am the king of breakdancing."

"You're all wrong," second guitarist Adam wades in. "The Bluetones' problem is that Scott has revolutionised the catering industry with his Baked Bean Pies, and still hasn't got the rewards he deserves."

"No, to be serious for exactly — Mark Morris looks at his watch — "one minute and four seconds, one of the problems we have had is that, up until four months ago, we'd got to where we were without any press, television or radio coverage — that old word-of-mouth thing happened, and we had a dedicated band of people who had followed us around the country, skipping rail fares and kipping on mates' sofas to see us live."

"Then, when we got into the charts and started being interviewed all over the place, it was like a barrier had been put between us. Before, if someone wanted to know what a lyric meant, they'd come up to us after the gig and ask. Now they read all this stuff in the press which is just a journalist's opinion, but because it's in black and white it looks like the Bible. And it's not. So that's the Bluetones' problem — what was personal and secret is now impersonal and on the cover of magazines."

"But that's OK. We'll just make the music even sweeter and stronger, and people will still get the message."

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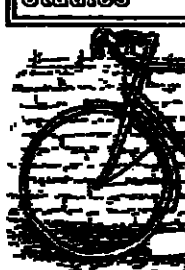
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EDUCATION

This is the truth sent from above

Girl and boy choristers may not, after all, sound that different

Can you tell the difference between the sounds made by girl and boy choristers? Many organists and directors of cathedral choir schools think they can, which is perhaps why it has taken so long for choirs to open their doors to girls. Boys' voices are purer, stronger, more intense, say those who know about such things, whereas girls' voices are lighter and breathier.

"A boy's voice in the year or so before it breaks has a particularly magical quality to it," says David Flood, organist at Canterbury Cathedral, one of the most traditional choir schools in England. "It is more powerful than a girl's." Female voices do not reach their peak until much later, Mr Flood says.

However, researchers at the Roehampton Institute, London, have found otherwise. When asked to identify from audiotapes whether a choir was male, female or mixed, the expert choirmasters often got it wrong.

The study, by Professor Graham Welch and his colleagues, entailed taping 15 choirs singing the first verse of the carol *This is the Truth Sent From Above*. The recording of each choir appeared three times on a single tape, so each expert had 45 examples to listen to.

Professor Welch, Dean of Education at Roehampton — who will take part in a panel at the Choir Schools Association conference at Wells Cathedral School, Somerset, next week — says: "We found that most of the time people were very certain, but that they were often very wrong."

In fact the experts got their judgments right more often than wrong, but there was a good deal of error. "They were consistently wrong, as well as consistently right," Professor Welch says. "There was no clear pattern." Some cathedral choirs were rated uniformly as being very boylike and they were in fact boys' choirs. Others were all-male cathedral choirs but were judged to be female. And there were two girls' choirs which were almost always classified as male.

Why was that? The academics found a clear correlation between male-sounding girls' choirs and the fact they were trained by a choirmaster from

a cathedral choir school. "Girls' choirs trained by men in the cathedral choir tradition produced girls' choirs that sang in the way that fitted their stereotype," Professor Welch says. "If you want boys to sound like boys, they can. If you want them to sound like girls, they can. Equally, if you want girls to sound like boys, they can."

"So the sound that boys or girls make to a certain extent is socially constructed. Therefore, if you don't want to have girls in a cathedral choir it's for social and cultural reasons, not for musical ones. It certainly doesn't seem to be for acoustic ones."

Not all members of the choir school world are surprised at the findings. "The battle is now won," says Richard Shep-



Boys — but do they sound it?

herd, Headmaster of the Minster School in York, which is taking 21 girl choristers for the first time this autumn. His will be the fifth school in the 39-strong membership of the Choir Schools Association to take girls.

The musical objection to having girls in choirs went, he says, after Salisbury began to take girls in 1991. The social argument that boys will desert any choir that contains girls is scaremongering, he adds.

However, most choir school heads establish separate boys and girls choirs when they do go coeducational. Thus, the girl choristers at York are singing separately from the boys, just as they do at Salisbury and other places. Edinburgh is the only one to have set up a mixed choir.

LUCY HODGES

Simon Midgley on why some parents prefer to teach their children at home

As experts agonise over the earliest moment at which a child can safely begin nursery classes, thousands of families have opted for the opposite approach. About 20,000 school-age children are being educated at home.

Isobel Bogucki's eldest son, Michael, 15, has never been to school. Neither has his sister Helen, 12, nor his brother Martin, 7.

Beverley Young's daughter, Cassie, 7, was withdrawn from primary school after five months, three years ago. She has never returned. Her younger brother Alexander, 4, will not be going to school either.

The children are part of a growing trend. Although precise numbers are hard to come by, Dr Roland Meighen, of Nottingham University, believes that as many as 10,000 families are taking the do-it-yourself option. The Department for Education and Employment knows of about 7,000 children in England who are not being taught in schools.

Education Otherwise, a national support group for parents dissatisfied with state and private education, says that about 80 families a month express an interest in educating their children at home. Twenty years ago there were just ten families in England and Wales who were educating their children at home.

In Victorian times, it was not unusual for the children of the well-to-do and upper classes to be taught by a tutor or governess. Now, however, children from all backgrounds are being home-educated.

There are many reasons why parents choose to teach their own children. Some do it for philosophical or religious reasons, others to escape bullying or because their children have special educational needs — they are perhaps dyslexic, school phobic or especially bright. Schools may variously be thought to be too formal, progressive or strict.

In Britain anyone can educate their children at home — while education is compulsory, school is not. Parents are not obliged to notify any authority if a child is to be taught at home after



Out of school: Beverley Young teaching her children, Alexander and Cassie, at their home in Preston

his or her fifth birthday. If parents withdraw a child already in school, however, they must inform the school, which must in turn tell the local education authority.

Beverley Young, a 32-year-old registered childminder from Preston, Lancashire, says she and her husband, David, a delivery driver, decided to withdraw their daughter from the local primary school because she was not getting enough individual attention. Cassie, who was reading fluently when she went to school just after turning four, became bored in reception class after being forced to read baby books.

Mrs Young was not happy either about peer pressures in the playground. "She became very streetwise. All the magic seemed to have been lost. I just wanted to allow her a little

bit more time to grow up slowly." Isobel Bogucki, a former chemistry and physics teacher, from Horsham, West Sussex, did not enjoy her grammar school and became increasingly disillusioned with education in schools while she was a teacher. "What the children needed and what we were doing for them did not match up. They were getting facts to pass exams, they were not following up their interests outside school."

Mrs Bogucki says: "When Michael was born I looked at him and thought 'He is going to grow up and go through that system' and I felt really sad. We never came to a decision not to send him, we thought we would think about it and just kept on thinking about it."

In the event, Michael has never been to school. He, his sister Helen,

and younger brother Martin have been home-educated by Mrs Bogucki. From the beginning she adopted an unstructured approach. While she read to her children, writing and mathematics evolved out of play and learning through everyday experiences.

Computation might be learnt through counting buns, working out how fast the car was travelling or noting changes in temperatures. "I let their interests lead them. Sometimes they need to learn things in order to do other things, but the main reason for learning is because you are interested."

"I don't believe there is any set time you should know a certain set of facts by. Learning new things continues throughout life."

Mrs Bogucki regards herself as an

organiser of resources and a learning facilitator. "I just try to expose them to what is available and what is possible and they can take up things which appeal to them. The fact that they reject something this week does not mean that they won't be interested in it next week."

"Education is not what you know. It's how you behave when you don't know and need to find out. Children at home don't have to pretend they know things and don't need to be insecure about not knowing."

It is difficult to know how to measure the success of her efforts. Michael started to write when he was five. Helen is only now getting interested in learning to spell correctly. Martin wrote for the first time at the age of eight last year but is still not very interested in writing.

Her husband Bob, a chemical engineer, sometimes has doubts about home education when he would like to see more formal written work. Their West Sussex local education authority, which inspects what Mrs Bogucki is doing three times a year, is not, she says, altogether convinced by her informal methods.

Michael says: "I think home education is good for some people, not necessarily for everyone. I find it good. I like it in the sense that I don't have to stick to the national curriculum and learn what the teachers say I have to learn. At the moment I'm reading about quantum physics and Einstein's theory of relativity."

Dr Meighen says that research in America and case studies in Britain suggest that if a family sustains home-based education for two years, they can normally expect their children to be about two years ahead of their contemporaries at school. At the top end of the scale, they could be ten years ahead and at the bottom no better or worse than contemporaries.

Where conditions are appropriate, he says, children can learn to read in 30 hours. They can be prepared for GCSE mathematics in 60 hours. Other studies, he adds, suggest that home-educated children are more socially mature and emotionally stable than their school-based contemporaries who are dependent on peers for language, attitudes and taste.

Home educators do what they do more efficiently, Dr Meighen says. They often offer one-to-one learning, direct access to resources, a friendly learning environment and children don't have to waste time travelling back and forth to school.

Dymphna Byrne finds that holidays can be the best time to take a course that will broaden your knowledge

School's in for summer

The students — better dressed and older than typical undergraduates — and the tubs of flowers and hanging baskets brightening Lancaster's rather severe modern campus gave it away. We were leisure learners, up for just a week during the summer. My simply furnished study bedroom was more in tune with student life: single bed, desk, wardrobe and drawers. Bathrooms and a small kitchen were along the corridor.

We followed various subjects, from brushing up our Italian conversation — French is old hat — to mastering the Alexander Technique — self-awareness is in. Silver-smithing, walking the fells and creative writing were among two dozen options. Supervised activities for four to eight-year-olds and Summer Fun for the eight-to-14s left parents free to follow their own courses.

People take summer courses for mental stimulation and pleasure. They are rarely disappointed. Vitality is the key. Whether you go alone, with a friend or couple or family, you will be engrossed; age and status are irrelevant. A 60-plus widow at Lancaster, initially intimidated by the swirl, decided to return. A couple of Summer Academy groupies at

Durham, friends in their early fifties, had taken a course every year since 1986. Tuition is high-calibre, from college lecturers, teachers, tutors from adult education classes and outside experts for specialist subjects. Spacious grounds and other amenities are at the disposal of summer students. Evening entertainment at most summer schools ranges from dances, discos and jazz to rambles, concerts and debates. There is usually a bar on campus.

The following round-up shows what is available. Prices are per person per week and, unless stated, include tuition and lodging.

UNIVERSITIES

Summer Academy: 13 British and Irish universities run 83 courses under four headings — Heritage, Countryside, the Arts, Personal Development. From June 29 to August 31, £340 to £390. Summer Academy, Keynes College, the University, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NP (01227 470402). **Lancaster:** Courses related to the area — Victorian Lancashire, the Romans in Northern



Putting their art into it: a class at Millfield School

Britain, the Reformation and the Monasteries are popular. The Lake District campus, Ambleside runs from July 1 to 12. Lancaster from July 29 to August 2, board and lodging £188-£290, course fees £65-£139; reductions for children. **Summer Studies,** Lancaster University, Storey Institute, Lancaster LA1 1TH (01524 894949). **Exeter:** Morning-only courses from August 4 to 10. Standard

or en-suite single rooms with some doubles, adults £249-£299, children £195-£235. **University of Exeter,** Domestic Services Division, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter, Devon EX4 4PZ (01392 215566). **Nottingham:** courses include The Glory of the Garden, Computing for the Terrified and Keys to Happiness. From July 20 to 27, £285-£350. Single study bedrooms. Learn at

Leisure, University of Nottingham, 14 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham NG1 4FQ (01159 516526).

St Andrews: Courses mainly with a Scottish theme.

Single or double rooms from June 22 to August 17, £199-£225. **St Andrews University Holidays,** 66 North Street, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9AH (01334 462222).

Stirling: Five-day and week-end courses. Stirling is noted for its music courses — from bagpipes and fiddles to Baroque. The campus on the beautiful Airthrey estate, an hour's drive from Glasgow and Edinburgh. From June 23 to August 17, £74-£268. **Summer School Office,** Airthrey Castle Annex, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA (01786 467951).

Glamorgan: Week-long courses from July 21 to August 2. Tuition fees £110. Accommodation only (single en-suite rooms) £52 a week, full board £110 a week. **University of Glamorgan,** Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan, CF37 1DL (01443 480480).

St Aidan's College, Durham: This new venture by the

Durham University college is a holiday rather than a study course. Tours, walks, visits to stately homes, castles. From July 6 to September 14, £299 standard room, £359 ensuite. **The Northumbria Experience,** St Aidan's College, University of Durham, Windmill Hill, Durham DH1 3LJ (0191-374 3280).

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Millfield: A choice of 330 courses under the headings of Sport, Art, Culture, Educational and Fun. From July 29 to August 16, Course fees £70-£180, children £70-£95. Accommodation and full board £150-£170, children from £99. **Millfield Village of Education,** Street, Somerset BA16 0YD (01458 443823).

Marlborough College: 50 new courses this year, from fly-fishing to botany for gardeners. From July 14 to August 3, adults £82-£185, children £45-£150, accommodation £100-£165. Discounts for families and senior citizens. **Marlborough College Summer School,** Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1PA (01672 892388). **Taunton School:** Wide range of subjects for adults and children. From July 28 to August 17, £225-£345. **Taunton Summer School,** Somerset TA2 6AD (01823 349243).

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Second chance in the Valleys

A 'community university' is a success, despite initial doubts

When it was launched in 1993, the Community University of the Valleys — designed to breathe new life into an area devastated by unemployment — was regarded by many as an experiment that was worthy but had little prospect of success.

This week, however, it has proved the doubters wrong by announcing major expansion. Swansea University's Department of Adult Continuing Education, the founder, is being joined in a new partnership by the Open University and Glamorgan University. A second chance in education will be extended from the western Valleys right across the former South Wales coalfield.

Swansea's intention, when it created the Community University, was to regenerate depressed Valley communities by meeting local people's

demands for more education and training. The university opened its doors at Banwen village, in the Dulais Valley, in a building converted by the European Community. A crèche was provided for the students' children.

Two and a half years on, Banwen has 50 students enrolled on its part-time degree courses, studying topics as diverse as modern Wales and the environment. And this summer the first intake will be taking their Part I examinations before doing three years more study to obtain the ten credits they will need for their degree.

Since Banwen opened, Swansea has established satellite centres in the Gwent

draeth Valley and Maesteg, enabling more students to embark on courses. It has also established a foundation year, teaching study skills and offering taster courses.

From the beginning, however, Swansea has focused on humanities and social science courses. Soon the entire curriculum should be covered. Under the Glamorgan scheme, students build up credits as they study. They can acquire a certificate of higher education after 30 weeks, a diploma in 60 weeks and a degree in 90.

The credit system has enabled the universities to establish their partnership. The Community University recognises credits or passes

achieved at any of the three. As a result, someone with sufficient Open University credits could go straight to Part II of the Swansea course. A part-time student from Banwen could use Swansea's credits towards a diploma or degree from Glamorgan.

The expectation is that successful students will receive their degrees from the institution that awards them the greatest number of credits. But the Community University is working towards establishing degree schemes that can be awarded jointly by two or more institutions.

The Community University has come a long way in two and a half years. But it acknowledges that more needs to be done, particularly to attract long-term unemployed men.

IOLA SMITH

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Solicitors acted for purchaser and lender

Bristol and West Building Society v May & Merriman and Others
Before Mr Justice Chadwick
[Judgment April 16]

When a solicitor acted for a purchaser and also for the lender providing finance for a property purchase, and received money representing the advance prior to completion, he held that money in trust for the lender. He was in breach of trust if he paid with the money in a manner which was contrary to his instructions or after failure to disclose to the lender facts which his retainer required him to disclose.

A lender would not normally be entitled to summary judgment in a case of non-disclosure, because the lender had also to show that his loss would not have occurred but for the breach, and there was therefore a triable issue as to whether or not he would have proceeded with the transaction if full disclosure had been made.

However, when the solicitor received the money from the lender after a request based on a warranty or representation by the solicitor which he knew, or ought to have known, was likely to be misleading, the solicitor was not entitled to challenge the lender's claim that he would not have proceeded with the transaction but for the warranty or representation. In such a case the lender was entitled to summary judgment.

Mr Justice Chadwick so held in the Chancery Division when giving a combined judgment in cases brought by the Bristol and West Building Society against 13 defendant solicitors. Some of the cases were appeals from decisions of district judges on applications for summary judgment under Order 14 of the Rules of the Supreme Court 1965, others were de novo applications under Order 14.

Mr Michael Burton, QC, Mr Paul Lowenstein, Mr Timothy Higginson, Mr William Bojczuk and Mr Christopher Semken for the society; Mr Nicholas Davidson, QC, Mr Patrick Lawrence and Miss Elizabeth Weaver for the defendant solicitors.

MR JUSTICE CHADWICK said that the actions arose out of loans made between 1988 and 1991 by the plaintiff building society for the purchase of domestic property. During those years the price of domestic property had been rising steeply and there was a widely held belief that it would continue to do so.

The society was an active lender in that market and loans equivalent to 90 per cent or more of the purchase price were not unusual. Several of the borrowers defaulted on repayment, and when the property market collapsed and house prices fell, the proceeds of sale of the repossessed properties

were in many cases insufficient to cover the borrowers' indebtedness. There was little hope of recovering the shortfall from the borrowers and the society sought to make recovery from the defendant solicitors.

The 13 cases represented only a small proportion of those commenced by the society against solicitors. Although each turned on its own facts they were heard together since there were common elements in the terms on which the solicitors were retained, and in view of the number of cases commenced some reasonably comprehensive guidance was necessary as to the way in which the court was to approach applications for summary judgment. The solicitors indemnity fund stood behind the individual defendant solicitors, and in effect the dispute was between the society and the fund.

It was a common feature of the cases that the society instructed the borrower's solicitor to act in relation to the taking of its security. The borrower gave the name of his solicitor to the society when he applied for an advance.

If the application was approved the society sent a copy of its offer to the solicitor, together with instructions inviting the solicitor to act on its behalf. In accepting those instructions the solicitor became solicitor to the parties on each side of the lending transaction.

The society made no direct payment to the borrower but paid the amount of the advance to the solicitor for the purpose of enabling the purchase of the property to be completed. The moneys received by the solicitor from the society for the purpose of a mortgage loan were held by the solicitor upon trust for the society.

All the defendants were subject to the society's standard terms and conditions, which required them, among other things, to investigate the title, prepare the mortgage deed and advise the society immediately of any discrepancy or variation in the details of the transaction.

An uncompleted printed form "Report on title and request for advance cheque" was sent to the solicitor. It had to be completed and signed by him, confirming that the details of the transaction accorded exactly with the particulars in the society's offer of advance and the solicitor's instructions. If that document was completed to the society's satisfaction, the society sent the solicitor its cheque for the advance.

In some cases the society alleged there were breaches of the obligation to investigate and report on title to the properties to be mortgaged. But in most cases the conduct complained of was that the solicitor knew of some fact, not relevant to the title, which would or might have influenced a lender in its decision to lend, and which

the solicitor did not disclose to the society.

His Lordship referred to *Target Holdings Ltd v Redfern* [1995] 3 WLR 352 in which the House of Lords accepted that a trustee who wrongly paid away trust money committed a breach of trust and came under an immediate duty to remedy that breach; but the quantum of compensation was fixed, at the date of judgment, as the figure then necessary to put the beneficiary into the position he would have been in had there been no breach.

Equitable compensation was designed to make good the loss in fact suffered by the beneficiaries and which, using hindsight and common sense, could be seen to have been caused by the breach.

The present cases raised a question which it had been unnecessary for the House of Lords to address directly in *Target*: where the breach lay in paying over the mortgage money at a time when the solicitors knew of a matter which ought to be reported to the lender prior to completion, what would have happened in the absence of that breach?

It was submitted on behalf of the solicitors that in order to keep faith with the approach in *Target* the court must investigate what would have happened if the solicitors had done all that they were required to do, namely to disclose the relevant matter and to seek authority to proceed.

If the society would have decided to proceed with the loan notwithstanding the matters disclosed, then, it was submitted, the breach of trust had caused no loss.

His Lordship said that that submission was difficult to reconcile with the Court of Appeal's decision in *Bishopsgate Investment Management Ltd v Maxwell* (No 2) [1994] 1 All ER 261, where the defendant, Mr Ian Maxwell, was held to be in breach of fiduciary duty in executing stock transfers without the authority of a board resolution to a company controlled by his father.

The court did not think it relevant to consider what would have happened if the defendant had refused, as he should have, to sign the transfers, although that was pre-eminently a case in which the answer to such an investigation might well have been that the transfers would have been made anyway on transfer forms signed by other directors.

It would, it seemed to his Lordship, be a strange principle of equity which allowed a solicitor who, in breach of his duty of good faith, gave his client a warranty which he knew to be false, intending that his client should act upon it, to say in answer to a claim for compensation for the resulting loss that his client must establish that he would not so have acted if he

had known the true facts. After all a common reason for knowingly giving a false warranty was the fear that without the false warranty the lender would refuse to proceed.

His Lordship referred to a principle identified by Lord Thorneycroft in a decision of the Privy Council on appeal from the Supreme Court of Canada, *Brickenden v London Loan and Savings Co* [1934] 3 DLR 465, namely that where a fiduciary had failed to disclose material facts he could not be heard to say that disclosure would not have altered the decision to proceed with the transaction.

It was accepted that the *Target* decision was inconsistent with the *Brickenden* principle in its application to cases of paying over money in breach of instructions, but it did not follow that the principle had to be treated as overruled by *Target* in cases where the breach of duty lay in the giving of a false warranty or representation for the purpose of obtaining the advance cheque. The decision in *Target* was not directed to that question.

The cases fell into three main groups:

1 The first was where his Lordship was satisfied on the facts that the defendant solicitors had received the mortgage money from the society in response to a request based upon a warranty or representation which the defendant solicitors knew, or must be taken to have known, to be misleading.

For example, in one of those cases the defendants did not inform the society that the effect of a special condition in the purchase contract was that the purchase price was £1,000 less than the price specified in the society's offer of advance.

It had been misleading for the solicitor to confirm to the society that the details of the transaction accorded exactly with the particulars in the society's offer of advance and the solicitor's instructions.

In that group of cases his Lordship was of the view that the *Brickenden* principle applied so that it was unnecessary to try the question whether the society would have made the advance if it had been told the true facts. That question was irrelevant.

Accordingly, the society was entitled to judgment in those cases, namely those where the defendant solicitors were May May & Merriman, London WC2; Chalmers Hunt & Gishy, Warr; Mr Anthony R. White, Broxbourne; Pillai Hassan & Corbin, London E1; and Mr Peter Sturgess, Mr Michael O'Neill and Mr Nigel Jeremy all of London W1.

2 In the second group of cases the alleged breach of duty did not consist of a misleading warranty or representation, but of a failure

to report some matter to the society. In those cases, his Lordship was satisfied that the society was entitled to succeed on the issue of liability in that the payment on completion was made in breach of its instructions.

But in that group, unlike the first, the society had also to prove that it would not have proceeded with the transaction if the matter in question had been reported to it.

It was not appropriate to determine that issue on summary judgment and the defendants should therefore have unconditional leave to defend on the issue of causation.

Those cases involved the defendant firms Bower Cotton & Bower, London EC4; Letley Blackwell, Harrow (save as to £3,433 with interest, in respect of which the society was entitled to judgment, the Simkins Partnership, London W1; Dalas Brett, Oxford and George H. Coles & Co, Hove.

3 The third group of cases consisted of those in which his Lordship was satisfied on the facts that the defendants ought to have realised that they should have made those inquiries or reported those facts. There was some issue in dispute which ought to be tried in relation to liability. Those cases involved the defendant firms Alan Budd & Co, Luton; Fancy & Jackson, Ashford, Middlesex; and Shadrest & Co, East Ham.

Solicitors Osborne Clarke, Bristol; Eversheds, Bristol, Veale Wasbrough, Bristol and Pinsent Curtis.

Capital and Counties plc and Another v Hampshire County Council
Before Judge Richard Havery, QC
[Judgment March 28]

A fire brigade was liable for the negligence of one of its officers in ordering that a sprinkler system in a burning building be turned off. The brigade was not immune from liability to the owner of the building on the ground of public policy.

Judge Richard Havery, QC, so held when sitting on official referee's business he gave judgment for the plaintiffs, Capital and Counties plc and Digital Equipment Company Ltd, against Hampshire County Council for damages to be assessed resulting from the destruction by fire of The Crescent, Jays Close, Basingstoke of which the first and second plaintiffs were the head lessee and the underlessee respectively.

Mr John Slater, QC, Mr Simon Brown, QC and Mr Alexander Antelme for the first plaintiff; Mr John Slater, QC, Mr Nigel Tozzi and Mr Alexander Gunning for the second plaintiff; Mr James Munby, QC and Mr Robert Beccroft for the council.

HIS LORDSHIP said the plaintiff's main complaint in the action was that a fire officer at the scene had ordered the shutting down of a sprinkler system serving the roof space of the building. The officer concerned had, without justification, concluded that the system did not serve the roof space.

Mr Munby had submitted that the brigade was immune from action on the ground of public policy by analogy with the position of the police service in *Almeida v Oxford* [1993] 4 All ER 325. In his Lordship's judgment,

When business ceased for tax purposes

Marriott v Lane (Inspector of Taxes)

Before Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor
[Judgment April 19]

For the purposes of claiming retirement relief from capital gains tax a taxpayer was to be taken as having ceased to carry on his business on the date when the cessation took place. His intention at that time that the cessation should only be temporary but which subsequently transpired to be permanent was to have no effect on the decision of that issue.

Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor, so held in a reserved judgment in the Chancery Division when allowing an appeal brought by way of case stated by the taxpayer, Mr Kevin F. Marriott, from Palsgrave general commissioners who had refused his claim to the relief under section 69 of the Finance Act 1985, see now section 163 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, and dismissed his appeal against an assessment to the tax for 1989-90 in the sum of £158,649 in respect of the disposal of land and buildings. The taxpayer's Aircraft Museum.

Section 69 of the 1985 Act provides for relief "if... in any case where a material disposal of business assets is made by an individual, who at the time of the disposal... (a) has attained the age of 60... (2) a disposal of business assets is... (b) a disposal of one or more assets which, at the time at which a business ceased to be

carried on, were in use for the purposes of that business... (4) A disposal of assets... is a material disposal if... (c) the date on which the business ceased to be carried on falls within the permitted period before the date of the disposal."

Paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 20 to the Act defines "permitted period" as "a period of one year". Mr Jeremy Woolf for the taxpayer; Mr Timothy Brennan for the Crown.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR said that the Torbay Aircraft Museum, owned by the taxpayer, born in 1928, was used by Torbay Aviation Ltd, a company of which the taxpayer was a director and majority shareholder.

The museum was closed to the public in October 1988. It never reopened, nor was its business resumed elsewhere. Its premises were disposed of for residential development on September 28, 1989.

The critical question was whether for section 69 purposes the museum's business had ceased to be carried on by September 28, 1989. The commissioners found that it had not. Their findings on that critical issue were that it had not been the intention of the directors of the company at the end of October 1988 for the museum to close permanently or to cease trading.

Mr Woolf had accepted that at the time of closure no final determination that the business would be terminated had been taken. He had accepted, too, that

up to and beyond the date of the disposal on September 1989 the same state of mind had pertained, the continuing intention of re-commencing the aircraft museum at new premises at some time in the future.

Mr Woolf said, however, that the case did fall within section 69: whatever the intention was in the period October 1988 to September 28, 1989, and notwithstanding the intention of resuming business at new premises at some time, the fact of the matter was that business never resumed. Looked at with hindsight, he submitted, it could be seen that the closure of the museum in October 1988 did in fact represent the cessation of business activities.

Mr Brennan emphasised the importance of the intention during the relevant period not to close or to cease trading.

His Lordship said that authorities for guidance as to the approach to be adopted to a determination of the question whether there had been a cessation of company's business had been referred to: *Kirk and Randall Ltd v Dunn* [1924] 8 TC 663; *Wild v Madame Tussaud's Ltd* [1926] 17 TC 127; *Ingram and Sons Ltd v Callaghan* [1909] 1 WLR 450 and *Robbroyd Brickworks Ltd v IRC* [1976] STC 329.

But it was a common feature of all those cases that the original business had been followed by a new business. The present case was different. A new business did not follow. The business was never resumed.

The intention of the directors that the closure should only be temporary should not have the same significance and importance as the like intention in the cited cases.

If an intended temporary cessation of business was not followed by a resumption of business, the intention was not fulfilled and the intended temporary cessation would turn out to have been permanent.

If, in such a case, the question was posed "when did the business cease to be carried on?" the only possible answer was that it ceased to be carried on when the cessation, intended to be temporary but transpiring to be permanent, took place.

If trade was closed down on a basis intended to be only temporary but that became in the event permanent, the date for section 69 purposes when the trade ceased to be carried on was the date on which the trade was closed down.

Solicitors: Anstey Sargent & Probert, Exeter; Solicitor of Inland Revenue.

Fire brigade liable to owner

Capital and Counties plc and Another v Hampshire County Council

Before Judge Richard Havery, QC
[Judgment March 28]

A fire brigade was liable for the negligence of one of its officers in ordering that a sprinkler system in a burning building be turned off. The brigade was not immune from liability to the owner of the building on the ground of public policy.

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the underlessee respectively.

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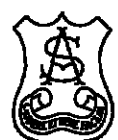
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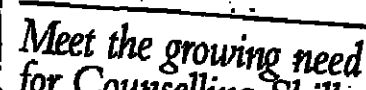
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Alderson 4:58:54; B De Bel
4:58:24; C Cuda 4:59:07; J King
4:58:56; K Kunkin 4:59:07; L
Nesley 4:58:55; R Van Der Raaij
4:59:07; S Simpson 4:59:07;
Warren 4:58:57; W Harrison 4:59:
4:58:57; Y Taylor 4:58:57; Z
4:58:52; D Newton 4:59:07; E
Southworth 4:59:00; P Wink
4:59:07; Q Quisenberry 4:59:07;
4:59:01; R Hawkins 4:59:01; P
Poulsen 4:59:01; S Harris 4:59:01;
P Gorman 4:59:01; T
4:59:01; Jackson 4:59:01; O
4:59:01; Vainola 4:59:03; C McCormack
4:59:03; A Skelton 4:59:03; J
4:59:03; A McClellan 4:59:03; J
4:59:03; M McCreath 4:59:03;
S Rainbow 4:59:03; C Chao 4:59:
4:59:04; M Millan 4:59:03; T
4:59:06; N Wadling 4:59:03; I
Williams 4:59:06; F Fendrum
4:59:06; G Gilchrist 4:59:06; H
Elyse 4:59:07; N Ridley 4:59:06;
M LeGosse 4:59:06; C Layton 4:59:06;
4:59:06; D Duggins 4:59:06; E
4:59:10; D Hughes 4:59:10; I Perry
4:59:10; L Sheppard 4:59:10; J
Christopher 4:59:10; K
4:59:12; J Chappell 4:59:12; S
4:59:13; D Smith 4:59:12; P Thompson
4:59:13; D Payne 4:59:12; S
Payne 4:59:12; A Kirby 4:59:13; A
Smith 4:59:13; B Hamilton-Burke
4:59:14; K Fox 4:59:14; L
4:59:14; P Glass 4:59:14; M Purkis
4:59:14; N Walther 4:59:14; O
Walho 4:59:14; M Page 4:59:14;
Lowe 4:59:14; P Schofield 4:59:15;
4:59:15; R Brown 4:59:15; S
M Tuft 4:59:15; K Jaggers 4:59:15;
C Prince 4:59:15; N Hoffmann
4:59:15; P Smith 4:59:15; R
R Blackwell 4:59:15; S Young
4:59:15; L Smith 4:59:17; B
4:59:17; J Davies 4:59:17;

Cornell 5:01:17; F Fry 5:01:19;
Cole 5:01:19; P Cole 5:01:19;
Simpson 5:01:19; A Moffat
5:01:19; B Moffat 5:01:19;
Marriott 5:01:20; C Hancock
5:01:20; D Shaw 5:01:21; A
Thomas 5:01:21; E Eliott 5:01:21;
B Allington 5:01:21; T English
5:01:21; U English 5:01:21; V
Delaham 5:01:23; G Hart 5:01:23;
J Russell 5:01:25; L Toon 5:01:25;
4:59:24; M Toon 5:01:25; N
5:01:25; S Inns 5:01:26; R Davies
5:01:26; G Rawlings 5:01:26; R
Brown 5:01:26; A Ellis 5:01:26;
G DYer 5:01:27;

20:491 P Bladen 5:01:27; S Row
5:01:27; D Joseph 5:01:28; J Sims
5:01:28; J Sims 5:01:28; K
5:01:29; P McNally 5:01:29; E
Watson 5:01:30; R Little 5:01:30; E
5:01:30; J Little 5:01:30; J
5:01:31; A Calver 5:01:32; I Hen
5:01:32; G Page 5:01:32; S Edney
5:01:32; G Page 5:01:32; S Edney
Hannigan 5:01:32; W Rudenberg
5:01:32; G Gru 5:01:32;
Mitchell-Smith 5:01:32; M
Davison 5:01:32; T Davison 5:01:32;
5:01:33; M Davison 5:01:33; M
5:01:33; G Allison 5:01:33; M
5:01:33; M Forrest 5:01:34; A
5:01:34; F Grimwood 5:01:35; G
Hansford 5:01:35; P Dewler
5:01:35; P Dewler 5:01:35; P
5:01:37; R Long 5:01:38; L
D Shourbridge 5:01:38; R Staple
5:01:38; R Staple 5:01:38;
Des Santos 5:01:40; R Baker
5:01:40; B Jackson 5:01:40; P
5:01:40; M Cooper 5:01:40; M
Carwardine 5:01:40; B Whitehead
5:01:42; A Shepherd 5:01:43; R
5:01:43; A Vilenos 5:01:43; R
Leighton 5:01:43; S 5:01:43;

N 10:1 M Frost 4:59:17; S
Nishikawa 4:59:17; T Wechtel
4:59:17; J Palmer 4:59:18;
N 11:1 M Frost 4:59:17; S
Palmer 4:59:18; G Cooper 4:59:19;
A Passy 4:59:19; L Ledger 4:59:19;
N 12:1 M Frost 4:59:17; S
4:59:19; G Cordery 4:59:19;
G Hunton 4:59:19; A
4:59:19; D Gatrell 4:59:20;
K Lawson 4:59:20; L
4:59:20; R 4:59:20;
Willooughby 4:59:21; T
4:59:21; C 4:59:21;
4:59:22; D Allan 4:59:23; L Uction
N Moog 4:59:23; T
4:59:23; J 4:59:23;
C Hayhoe 4:59:23; R Brown
4:59:23; J 4:59:23; T
4:59:23; D Foreman 4:59:23; L Ball
4:59:23; P Brites 4:59:23; K Keeling
4:59:23; J 4:59:23; T
Abreu 4:59:24; L Keeling 4:59:25;
J Butti 4:59:26; C Savory 4:59:26;
Macgregor 4:59:27; T Nash
4:59:27; A Terry 4:59:27; J Dele
Bennett 4:59:29; D London
4:59:31; P Emery 4:59:31; M
Harvey 4:59:32; T Mundy 4:59:32;
4:59:32; T Saunders 4:59:33;
Demory 4:59:33; T Farte 4:59:33;
4:59:33; L Hildenthorpe 4:59:34; A
Henson 4:59:34; C Coombes
4:59:34; K George 4:59:34;
Ramsey 4:59:34; L Lawman
4:59:34; T 4:59:34;
4:59:34; V Petrusius 4:59:35; D
Tranter 4:59:36; M Harrison
4:59:37; G Jones 4:59:40;
4:59:39; G Loondens 4:59:40;
Cheesman 4:59:41; L
Tippin 4:59:41; L Alda 4:59:42;
Abbott 4:59:42; E Delour 4:59:43;
Fryer 4:59:44; E Deaton 4:59:45;
Daur 4:59:44; M Dixon 4:59:45;
4:59:46; R Maund 4:59:46;
D Mercer 4:59:46; M Atkinson
4:59:47; A 4:59:47;
Hutcheon 4:59:47; A Savides
4:59:47; S Payne 4:59:47; J

J Arnold 50:1:47; K Warrmouth
50:1:47; B 50:1:47;
Arnold 50:1:55; Dunlop 50:1:51;
L Jones 50:1:51; F Briggs 50:1:51;
M Park 50:1:51; H Fraser 50:1:54;
D Draper 50:1:54; R Gustafson
50:1:54; J 50:1:54;
Richards 50:1:55; S Manvon
50:1:55; S Barnes 50:1:57; L Fisher
50:1:57; J 50:1:57;
50:2:00; Q Guesly 50:2:00;
Lawrence 50:2:00; P
50:2:00; C 50:2:00;
Prema 50:2:02; A Smith 50:2:02;
T Seton 50:2:03; S Koden 50:2:03;
R 50:2:03; J 50:2:03;
R Kocis 50:2:04; R Darley
50:2:04; D Middleston 50:2:05;
Middleston 50:2:05; B Kuenne
50:2:05; D Caldeira 50:2:05;
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Adams 50:2:05; D Williams
50:2:05; R Blackman 50:2:05;
50:2:05; B Roberts 50:2:05;
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50:2:06; J Coupe 50:2:07; S Bates

28:501 M Zhenyalk 50:208: M
28:501 M Zhenyalk 50:208: M
Zhenyalk 50:208: M Backwa
Hodder 50:208: J Pearce 50:211:
50:211: M Zhenyalk 50:211:
50:211: S Donald 50:211:
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50:211: N Brinn 50:211: D
Linter 50:211: S Hancock 50:216:
George 50:216: R Carllidge
50:216: M He 50:216:
Featherbe 50:216: R Speight
50:216: M Harris 50:217:
Harris 50:217: P Penach 50:217:
R Ambler 50:217: D Heaney
50:217: M 50:217:
Winters 50:217: T Yoshida
50:217: R Smith 50:219: G Doyle
50:219: S 50:219:
Newbery 50:211: B Macro 50:221:
50:221: P Wick 50:222: S Burrell
50:223: G Oliver 50:223: M
50:223: J 50:223:
J Sexton 50:224: H Larson
50:224: C Baslin 50:225: M
50:225: J Evans 50:226: J Dennis
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50:227: A 50:227:

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 5:04:55; C Williams 5:04:56; J
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 5:04:57; M Arnold 5:04:57; C
 Archer 5:04:58; G Morrison
 5:04:59; S Horn 5:04:59; L Evans
 5:05:00; C Harco 5:05:00; C
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 5:05:04; J Thackway 5:05:05; S
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 Peck 5:05:07; D Cooper 5:05:07;
 V Hesse 5:05:08; M Smith 5:05:08;
 S Neuman 5:05:09;
 5:05:09; C Healey 5:05:09; W
 Simms 5:05:09; A Priest 5:05:09;
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 P Cardiff 5:05:09; J Chandler
 5:05:09; L Winkworth 5:05:11;
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 5:05:12; G Nelson 5:05:12; K
 Gyllmer 5:05:12; C Gellie 5:05:13;
 B Shergill 5:05:13; A Winkworth
 5:05:14; M Huselin 5:05:14; I
 5:05:14; Huse 5:05:14; S Southall
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5:08:42; R Lown 5:08:42; S
5:08:44; K Okuyama 5:08:44; I Forward
5:08:44; D Fleming 5:08:44;
5:08:45; Buckley 5:08:45; P Perman
5:08:45; J Legner 5:08:45;
5:08:46; J Chipman 5:08:46; J Johnson
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5:08:46; J McQuinn 5:08:46;
5:08:48; T Withersow 5:08:48; B
5:08:48; S Beavers 5:08:48; S Wade 5:08:48;
5:08:49; J McQuinn 5:08:49;
5:08:50; P Bunce 5:08:50; J Ladd
5:08:50; A Brown 5:08:50; S Wilson
5:08:50; J McQuinn 5:08:50;
5:08:51; Houson 5:08:51; A Whelan
5:08:51; J McQuinn 5:08:51;
5:08:52; Arnold 5:08:52; P O'Reilly 5:08:52;
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5:08:53; J McQuinn 5:08:53;
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5:08:54; J McQuinn 5:08:54;
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5:08:57; J McQuinn 5:08:57; A Clark
5:08:57; N McMillan 5:08:57; M
5:08:58; J McQuinn 5:08:58;
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509:17; 509:18; 509:19; 509:20; 509:21; 509:22; 509:23; 509:24; 509:25; 509:26; 509:27; 509:28; 509:29; 509:30; 509:31; 509:32; 509:33; 509:34; 509:35; 509:36; 509:37; 509:38; 509:39; 509:40; 509:41; 509:42; 509:43; 509:44; 509:45; 509:46; 509:47; 509:48; 509:49; 509:50; 509:51; 509:52; 509:53; 509:54; 509:55; 509:56; 509:57; 509:58; 509:59; 509:60; 509:61; 509:62; 509:63; 509:64; 509:65; 509:66; 509:67; 509:68; 509:69; 509:70; 509:71; 509:72; 509:73; 509:74; 509:75; 509:76; 509:77; 509:78; 509:79; 509:80; 509:81; 509:82; 509:83; 509:84; 509:85; 509:86; 509:87; 509:88; 509:89; 509:90; 509:91; 509:92; 509:93; 509:94; 509:95; 509:96; 509:97; 509:98; 509:99; 509:100; 509:101; 509:102; 509:103; 509:104; 509:105; 509:106; 509:107; 509:108; 509:109; 509:110; 509:111; 509:112; 509:113; 509:114; 509:115; 509:116; 509:117; 509:118; 509:119; 509:120; 509:121; 509:122; 509:123; 509:124; 509:125; 509:126; 509:127; 509:128; 509:129; 509:130; 509:131; 509:132; 509:133; 509:134; 509:135; 509:136; 509:137; 509:138; 509:139; 509:140; 509:141; 509:142; 509:143; 509:144; 509:145; 509:146; 509:147; 509:148; 509:149; 509:150; 509:151; 509:152; 509:153; 509:154; 509:155; 509:156; 509:157; 509:158; 509:159; 509:160; 509:161; 509:162; 509:163; 509:164; 509:165; 509:166; 509:167; 509:168; 509:169; 509:170; 509:171; 509:172; 509:173; 509:174; 509:175; 509:176; 509:177; 509:178; 509:179; 509:180; 509:181; 509:182; 509:183; 509:184; 509:185; 509:186; 509:187; 509:188; 509:189; 509:190; 509:191; 509:192; 509:193; 509:194; 509:195; 509:196; 509:197; 509:198; 509:199; 509:200; 509:201; 509:202; 509:203; 509:204; 509:205; 509:206; 509:207; 509:208; 509:209; 509:210; 509:211; 509:212; 509:213; 509:214; 509:215; 509:216; 509:217; 509:218; 509:219; 509:220; 509:221; 509:222; 509:223; 509:224; 509:225; 509:226; 509:227; 509:228; 509:229; 509:230; 509:231; 509:232; 509:233; 509:234; 509:235; 509:236; 509:237; 509:238; 509:239; 509:240; 509:241; 509:242; 509:243; 509:244; 509:245; 509:246; 509:247; 509:248; 509:249; 509:250; 509:251; 509:252; 509:253; 509:254; 509:255; 509:256; 509:257; 509:258; 509:259; 509:260; 509:261; 509:262; 509:263; 509:264; 509:265; 509:266; 509:267; 509:268; 509:269; 509:270; 509:271; 509:272; 509:273; 509:274; 509:275; 509:276; 509:277; 509:278; 509:279; 509:280; 509:281; 509:282; 509:283; 509:284; 509:285; 509:286; 509:287; 509:288; 509:289; 509:290; 509:291; 509:292; 509:293; 509:294; 509:295; 509:296; 509:297; 509:298; 509:299; 509:300; 509:301; 509:302; 509:303; 509:304; 509:305; 509:306; 509:307; 509:308; 509:309; 509:310; 509:311; 509:312; 509:313; 509:314; 509:315; 509:316; 509:317; 509:318; 509:319; 509:320; 509:321; 509:322; 509:323; 509:324; 509:325; 509:326; 509:327; 509:328; 509:329; 509:330; 509:331; 509:332; 509:333; 509:334; 509:335; 509:336; 509:337; 509:338; 509:339; 509:340; 509:341; 509:342; 509:343; 509:344; 509:345; 509:346; 509:347; 509:348; 509:349; 509:350; 509:351; 509:352; 509:353; 509:354; 509:355; 509:356; 509:357; 509:358; 509:359; 509:360; 509:361; 509:362; 509:363; 509:364; 509:365; 509:366; 509:367; 509:368; 509:369; 509:370; 509:371; 509:372; 509:373; 509:374; 509:375; 509:376; 509:377; 509:378; 509:379; 509:380; 509:381; 509:382; 509:383; 509:384; 509:385; 509:386; 509:387; 509:388; 509:389; 509:390; 509:391; 509:392; 509:393; 509:394; 509:395; 509:396; 509:397; 509:398; 509:399; 509:400; 509:401; 509:402; 509:403; 509:404; 509:405; 509:406; 509:407; 509:408; 509:409; 509:410; 509:411; 509:412; 509:413; 509:414; 509:415; 509:416; 509:417; 509:418; 509:419; 509:420; 509:421; 509:422; 509:423; 509:424; 509:425; 509:426; 509:427; 509:428; 509:429; 509:430; 509:431; 509:432; 509:433; 509:434; 509:435; 509:436; 509:437; 509:438; 509:439; 509:440; 509:441; 509:442; 509:443; 509:444; 509:445; 509:446; 509:447; 509:448; 509:449; 509:450; 509:451; 509:452; 509:453; 509:454; 509:455; 509:456; 509:457; 509:458; 509:459; 509:460; 509:461; 509:462; 509:463; 509:464; 509:465; 509:466; 509:467; 509:468; 509:469; 509:470; 509:471; 509:472; 509:473; 509:474; 509:475; 509:476; 509:477; 509:478; 509:479; 509:480; 5

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**REKEEPER
OF THE
C GAMES**

1 Rogers 5:13:09; 2 Silcock 5:13:09;
3 Burrier 5:13:09; 4 O'Grady 5:13:09;
5 O'Grady 5:13:09; 6 Lyndon
5:13:09; 7 Simpkins 5:13:09;
8 Tropea 5:13:09; 9 Watkins
5:13:11; 10 Ward 5:13:12; 11
Broderick 5:13:12; 12
C Mackay 5:13:12; 13
14 5:13:12; 15 Leung 5:13:12;
16 McDermid 5:13:16; 17 Rowlands
5:13:17; 18 Mann 5:13:18;
19 Fountain 5:13:22; 20 K Schuster
5:13:30; 21 Luker 5:13:20;
22 Murphy 5:13:21; 23 Luker 5:13:21;
24 5:13:22; 25 G. Foley
5:13:22; 26 Landles 5:13:23;
27 Hewitt 5:13:23;
28 5:13:23; 29 G. Landles 5:13:23;
30 Button 5:13:24; 31 McGillivray
5:13:24; 32 5:13:24; 33
34 Spencer 5:13:24; 35 K. Davis 5:13:25;
36 5:13:25; 37 A. Hermiston
5:13:25; 38 5:13:25;
39 Hensley 5:13:28; 40 Morris 5:13:28;
41 5:13:28; 42 5:13:28;
43 5:13:30; 44 Marchetti 5:13:30;
45 Tasulins 5:13:31; 46 Lehmann
5:13:31; 47 5:13:31;
48 5:13:34; 49 Finnegan 5:13:34;
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100:59; 50:59; P Wagner 5:10:30;
 100:60; 50:60; P Wagner 5:10:30;
 100:61; 50:61; Jarnal 5:10:01;
 100:62; 50:62; Jarnal 5:10:01;
 100:63; 50:63; M Woodward 5:10:01;
 100:64; 50:64; Jarnal 5:10:01;
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14:33: D Paradise 5:14:34; W
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14:36: L Lills 5:14:37; Buchart
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63:1 K Foster 5:16:34; D Conyon
 63:2 B Ward 5:16:35; R Priest
 63:3 J Dighton 5:16:37; A
 63:4 J Dodd 5:16:38; J
 63:5 M 5:16:39; P Clayton 5:16:39;
 63:6 S Moore 5:16:40; P Parker 5:16:39;
 63:7 J 5:16:41; J 5:16:41; J
 63:8 A Keller 5:16:41; P Cheley
 63:9 G 5:16:41; L Kelpheir 5:16:42; H
 63:10 J 5:16:42; C F
 63:11 P Pope 5:16:44; D Grigg
 63:12 M Kree 5:16:46; M Naigre
 63:13 J 5:16:46; J 5:16:46; J
 63:14 M Sandilington 5:16:49; M
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1744: H. Walters 5:1743: H. Walters 5:1742: K. Toller 5:1743: A. Sade 5:1743: Russell 5:1744: S. Massey 5:1745: K. Kimura 5:1746: C. Dockravy 5:1747: D. Hays 5:1748: D. Hays 5:1749: N. Kers 5:1750: N. Kers 5:1751: A. Clarke 5:1752: K. Patel 5:1753: D. Bester 5:1754: D. Foster 5:1755: C. Lloyd 5:1756: G. Bush 5:1757: S. C. Lloyd 5:1758: A. C. Newman 5:1759: D. Bush 5:1760: A. Klein 5:1761: G. McCarty 5:1762: A. Klein 5:1763: K. King 5:1764: K.

22.801 B. Tennyson 5:2150: S. Potter 5:2151: D. Morgan 5:2152: S. Taylor 5:2153: D. Reeve 5:2154: R. Wilkinson 5:2155: B. Jones 5:2156: J. Simmons 5:2157: L. Lynch 5:2158: S. McDermid 5:2159: A. Jones 5:2160: M. Kerr 5:2161: M. Takayama 5:2162: A. Pearm 5:2163: J. Galt 5:2164: D. Wiles 5:2200: M. Almagi 5:2201: N. Coppens 5:2202: K. Galt 5:2203: A. Couch 5:2204: P. Galt 5:2205: A. Avery 5:2206: S. Finch 5:2207: A. Finch 5:2208: M. Miller 5:2209: R. Leslie 5:2210: J. Lewis 5:2211: L. Hoskins 5:2212: W. Smith 5:2213:

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Bradford captain stands on verge of Wembley record

Paul leads by youthful example

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

THERE is more to the elfin-featured Robbie Paul than meets the eye. He cut his first record recently, writes songs, paints, is a student of fine art, teaches children about healthy living and, tomorrow, will lead Bradford Bulls as the youngest captain at Wembley in a rugby league Challenge Cup final. Everything, it seems, but sit on a mushroom, where he looks to belong.

Few have packed as much as Paul, a New Zealander, into 20 years and three months. He has two daughters — Tesha, two, and Mia, five months — and a young man coping with such responsibilities was quickly made central to the plans at Bradford of Brian Smith, the Australian coach, who awarded him the dual role of scrum half and captain. Until Smith's arrival, Paul had tried in vain to convince Peter Fox, his predecessor, surviving on a thin ration of first-team appearances.

"To me, it was like stumbling on an undiscovered gem," Smith said. "I can't remember a kid like him. Self-aware, totally together, who has rugby league as his passion, while knowing it's his meal ticket. He's not yet the finished article as a player, but he's one with very special talents."

Paul was initially uncertain about his future under Smith. "At the start of the century season, I was one of five New Zealanders," he said. "One by one, they went, until there were all these Aussies around me. There were two ways to take it. I thought I'd just stamp my mark. Brian liked it and things have not been going too bad since."

Growing up in the Auckland suburb of Te Atatu, Robbie and Henry Paul, his older brother now at Wigan, would sneak out of bed to watch the Challenge Cup live from the other side of the world. Henry was there last year and his advice to his sibling is straightforward: "An early touch of the ball, an early tackle and don't look up at the crowd."

Spinning like a mini whirl-



Paul, revelling in the captain's role, looks forward to the cup final yesterday. Photograph: John Hoolihan

wind out of the tackle has become a family trademark, but, whereas Henry is the opportunist *par excellence* in exploiting opposition weaknesses, the strapping Robbie, 5ft 10in and 12st, is a more structured player, who finds gaps for others by a change of direction, shake of the hips or supremely judged pass.

With Robbie over a jittery early period before settling into the scrum half position that he previously played at school, the prospect for New Zealand of both Paul brothers lining up at half back is more than just intriguing. Like brothers do, they fought, but, having settled in England, find themselves best friends.

It was a fingers and thumbs performance by Robbie when the brothers met in Bradford's game away to Wigan a week ago. St Helens will be hoping for the same at Wembley, but

Bradley what to do," he said. "He's been around the game long enough to know what's going on."

The label of the youngest captain — Shaun Edwards

The Challenge Cup will continue to be televised by the BBC for the next three years under a reported £3 million deal struck with the Rugby Football League in which the springtime date of the final is retained. A move to mid-summer in line with the new Super League had been mooted. The agreement gives Sky Television the right to show highlights for the first time.

are likely to be disappointed by a young man who takes his captain's duties seriously, although responsibility is shared. "If we're behind the sticks, I can't tell Graeme

was 21 years and six months when he led Wigan to victory in 1989 — is one that someone who has been forced to grow up early is undaunted by. Indeed, Paul speaks like some-

one much older. "People my age perhaps like to get on the drink or party, but I just get on with the job, because I've got two mouths to feed," he said.

To the children who go to Odsal to hear Paul's anti-drugs message, advice on good health and his cultural lessons, the player not that much older than themselves has become a role model at a club that, only a year ago, did not really bother with the diverse community around it. It was with some regret that he had to drop out of a course at Dewsbury Art College because of Smith's demands on his players' time, but, on and off the field, Paul continues to set fine examples.

O'Sullivan displays world championship potential

By PHIL WATTS

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN, who controversially played a sequence of left-handed shots on to victory over Alain Robidoux in the first round of the Embassy world snooker championship five days ago, adopted a more conventional, if equally spectacular, approach on his return to the Crucible Theatre yesterday.

In building a 6-2 lead over Tony Drago, of Malta, in the last 16, O'Sullivan showcased the ease of break-building that has led him to be regarded as a serious threat to the continued dominance of Stephen Hendry, the title-holder.

O'Sullivan could face a charge of bringing the game into disrepute after derogatory and ill-considered comments about Robidoux and there were those who thought that this would adversely affect his performance against Drago. They were wrong.

Drago, himself convincing in beating Steve James 10-2 in the first round, made an encouraging start. He recovered from a 58-11 deficit to steal the opening frame on the black with a 53 clearance and entered the mid-session interval at 2-2 thanks to a 144 total clearance. That matched the highest break of Drago's career and an opening-day run from Peter Ebdon as the highest break of the 1996 championship. Drago is thus

in line for a half share of the £17,000 sponsors' bonus.

However, Drago is as erratic as he is talented and mistakes began to creep in. Leading 49-37 in the fifth frame, Drago missed a relatively straightforward red and O'Sullivan was in follow in the sixth frame. O'Sullivan opened the scoring with a 62 break, Drago responded with 57 but missed a simple pink when only that, plus the black, would have enabled him to level it 3-3. O'Sullivan then accounted for the closing two frames of the afternoon with breaks of 100 and 120.

James Wattana retained his place in the game's top 16 next season, but his 10-8 win over Jimmy Michie, of Pontefract, severely tested the out-of-form

Thai. Although he trailed 5-4 overnight, Wattana appeared to have weathered the storm by establishing a 9-6 advantage.

Michie refused to capitulate, though, and, when he pulled back to 8-9, thoughts of being involved in the summer preliminary rounds for next season's ranking events — the lot of those outside the top 16 — must have been uppermost in Wattana's mind. It was therefore with immense relief that Wattana comfortably won the eighteenth frame to set up a meeting with Nigel Bond.

John Spencer, the chairman of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA), the game's governing body, could have compromised his position by betting on a number of matches at leading tournaments. An article in the *Daily Express* yesterday quoted Stan James, a bookmaker, as saying that Spencer has also "acted as an intermediary for the players on occasions" by placing bets on their behalf.

Nothing illegal has taken place and no results or scores have been manipulated in any way. However, it is traditional that the chairman is appointed at the first board meeting of the WPBSA after the championship and this will have done harm to Spencer's chances of re-election.



O'Sullivan: impressive

THUNDERER
5.45 Just For A Reason, 6.15 Philip's Woody, 6.45 Min-Lou-And, 7.15 Sound Forecast, 7.45 Tuffnut George, 8.15 Alifound.
Carl Evans: 7.45 Tuffnut George.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SS

5.45 HARRIS ALLDAY LEA AND BROOKS
NOVICES SELLING HURDLE (22.070: 2m) (18 runners)

1. HARRIS ALLDAY LEA (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 2. BROOKS (10) M. Brooks 5-11-3. 3. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 4. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 5. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 6. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 7. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 8. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 9. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 10. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 11. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 12. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 13. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 14. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 15. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 16. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 17. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 18. DANCING AT LAMBERT (10) M. Harris 5-11-3.

6.15 BROMFIELD SAND AND GRAVEL HANDICAP
CHASE (23.525: 2m 4f) (8)

1. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 2. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 3. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 4. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 5. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 6. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 7. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 8. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 9. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 10. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 11. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 12. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 13. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 14. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 15. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 16. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 17. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 18. BROMFIELD SAND (10) M. Harris 5-11-3.

6.45 D J PROFILES HANDICAP HURDLE
(22.560: 2m) (12)

1. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 2. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 3. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 4. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 5. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 6. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 7. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 8. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 9. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 10. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 11. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 12. D J PROFILES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3.

7.15 SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS NOVICES
HANDICAP CHASE (23.363: 3m) (13)

1. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 2. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 3. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 4. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 5. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 6. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 7. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 8. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 9. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 10. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 11. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 12. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 13. SHROPSHIRE REGIMENTS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3.

7.45 STRONGBOW HUNTERS CHASE
(Antelope): 21.725: 2m 4f (17)

1. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 2. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 3. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 4. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 5. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 6. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 7. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 8. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 9. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 10. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 11. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 12. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 13. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 14. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 15. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 16. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 17. STRONGBOW HUNTERS (10) M. Harris 5-11-3.

8.15 CANNING NOVICES HURDLE
(22.415: 3m 2f 110yds) (15)

1. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 2. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 3. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 4. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 5. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 6. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 7. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 8. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 9. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 10. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 11. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 12. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 13. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 14. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3. 15. CANNING NOVICES (10) M. Harris 5-11-3.

COURSE SPECIALISTS
TRAINER: H. Harris, 22 winners from 52 runners, 33.3%, D. Harris, 20 from 91, 27.2%, K. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, M. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, P. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, T. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, W. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, Y. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, Z. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, A. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, B. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, C. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, D. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, E. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, F. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, G. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, H. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, I. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, J. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, K. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, L. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, M. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, N. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, O. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, P. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, Q. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, R. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, S. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, T. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, U. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, V. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, W. Harris, 10 from 25, 27.1%, X. 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Leading candidates lack proven ability

FA has time on its side in search for Venables' successor

IRRESPECTIVE of England's performance in the forthcoming finals of the European championship, the question of a successor to Terry Venables as coach is being regarded with disproportionate urgency. Finding the right man is far more important than the timing.

To make an appointment before the finals, solely for the sake of reaching a decision, would be potentially more damaging than any delay, if England got the wrong man. Given that the hands-on aspect of any England coach is necessarily part-time, it would be possible for Venables to continue on a match-to-match basis until such time as the Football Association was certain of getting a suitably qualified candidate. The platform that Venables has created will not disintegrate overnight.

Finding the right candidate is far more difficult than is at present being admitted. The difficulty is, if anything, emphasised by the relative success that Venables has so far achieved, with one defeat in 16 matches, seven victories and eight draws.

Against Croatia at Wembley on Wednesday night, England were exhibiting, after nearly two years' work and adaptation, a degree of sophistication in their tactics that was most encouraging; not to say unimaginable in the era of Graham Taylor.

The truth is that a manager-coach with proven ability and experience, even approaching that of Venables, does not exist at present. The risk of making an error as serious as the appointment of Taylor in 1990 is, therefore, that much greater.

The FA, ignorant then of what it was doing, sailed happily towards the horizon with Taylor, not pausing to consider that he had never won a significant trophy, had never played senior, let alone international, football, and had handled few international players. He was learning as he went along, hand-in-hand



Getting the right man is far more important for England than getting him right now, argues David Miller

with the players. "Coach," is really the wrong word. The man in charge of an international team has no opportunity to coach. His job is one of selection, player-judgment, choice of tactics, and the discussion with intelligent players on how to make the steep transfer from club to national stage.

Venables has managed to do this. A point to remember is that he was the unanimous choice of fellow professionals. His merits had been tried and tested with Queens Park Rangers, Barcelona and Tottenham Hotspur — but what

Bryan Robson has signed a two-year extension to his contract as the Middlesbrough manager, effectively ruling himself out of contention for the job of England coach when Terry Venables steps down after Euro 96. The deal will keep Robson at Middlesbrough until 1999. Robson, who is understood to Venables but has repeatedly said that he needs more experience before tackling the England job, said that he was looking forward to signing more quality players for Middlesbrough next season.

of his successor? The most prominent manager in England is Scottish and, whatever logic there might be in considering a foreigner — the FA is not traditionally strong on logic — it is unthinkable that it would contemplate Alex Ferguson, unavoidably perceived in the context of international football as the tartan enemy.

The frontrunners, therefore, are Kevin Keegan, Glenn Hoddle, Gerry Francis and, possibly, Ray Wilkins. None of them, I would say, is as yet ready, never mind whether or not they seek the job. None

has, as yet, won a significant trophy, nor demonstrated whether they can handle intense, front-line scrutiny.

Keegan comes closest, and his preference for open play is an appealing qualification. Reality suggests that this might not prosper in the international arena. He needs time.

So does Hoddle. The campaign to promote him seems particularly premature. His own international career oscillated partly on account of managerial hesitancy — lack of conviction — and partially through his own inability to deliver, consistently, those qualities that made him so admired at White Hart Lane.

Furthermore, is Hoddle's temperament tough enough to handle a squad in which all 20 players are, or think they are, star quality? The only real star at Chelsea is a genial, amiable Dutchman. Hoddle needs longer in the club crucible.

It seems to me that there are two options for the FA: the broad-minded, venturesome appointment of an established foreign coach, or the persuasion of Venables. For all his assertion that he does not wish to continue, it is the logical course for both parties. Venables is the first England coach since Sir Alf Ramsey who truly understands the acute difference between the club and the national job.

As Miljan Miljanic, the Yugoslavia manager and now chairman, long ago said: "The club manager selects a squad and tries to find a system that enables them to play. The international coach must choose a system, and then find the players to utilise it."

In other words, the two jobs are exact opposites and, in the second, the manager/coach's assessment of players' abilities and intelligence is even more critical.



England began to show the kind of sophistication against Croatia at Wembley that Venables has been striving for

Scotland look shaky fore and aft

By KEVIN MCCARRA

AN INTERNATIONAL football match is supposed to serve as a process of elimination, but Scotland's 2-0 defeat in Denmark on Wednesday did not so much whittle down the options of Craig Brown, the manager, as reduce them to matchwood. Although the margin by which his team lost was not traumatic, the ease with which Denmark acquired it, inside the opening 27 minutes, was distressing.

Brown is left to wonder just who he can count upon, for, in Copenhagen, he fielded a team of seasoned players, whose know-how has, in the past, stifled exuberant opponents. That trait completely vanished at the Parken Stadium.

Instead of suffering the smothering attentions of markers, the Laudrup brothers

breathed easily in the open spaces that they found so readily. Their moments of trickery produced chagrin among defenders, but, where the goals were concerned, the degree of artifice was not great. The elementary mistakes that created the openings had not been anticipated, even if Calderwood and McLaren, members of Brown's customary three-man defence, were missing through injury.

After all, Boyd and McKimmie, their replacements, have 70 caps between them. Yet they and Hendry, who was hampered by the heavy strapping on a damaged ankle, never seemed clear about the positions that they should take up in relation to one another.

Their absence of rapport alarmed Brown, since his team will need all the hard-

ness that it can muster come the European championship.

The manager cannot even be sure of reverting to an established line-up, for nobody knows how long Calderwood will need to recover and it can only be hoped that the knee surgery that McLaren is to undergo after the Tennents Scottish Cup final will prove trivial.

Whoever is available, Scotland will have to ensure that they can provide protection to their own goal. While the Laudrups are superb footballers, Denmark, despite being the European champions, do have a handful of nondescript performers. Yet it was all too easy for them.

In part, their progress went unhindered because Scotland were experimenting. The discovery of an effective partnership in attack is becoming a matter of urgency and

Brown hoped that the forwards might have more opportunities to shine if play was carried to Denmark.

Spencer did well enough, even if he was sluggish when given the opportunity to shoot. The technique that he showed with his lay-offs suggested that some as yet unidentified partner could make good use of such service. In Copenhagen, though, Gallacher did not seem suited to the role of central attacker. Brown may well be left to trust in Scott Booth, the Aberdeen forward, who has missed half the season with a groin injury.

Next Thursday, Brown names his party for a trip to the United States and those same men will form the squad for the European championship. The attempt to conjure up solidity from crumbling resources may be the most daunting project of his career.

IN BRIEF

Eastbourne provides Graf's final preparation

STEFFI GRAF, 26, the Wimbledon tennis champion and world No 1, will break with her normal practice of resting during the week before Wimbledon by taking part in the Direct Line International championships at Eastbourne from June 18 to 22. She will be joined at the event by Mary Pierce, the winner of the Australian Open last year.

Eastbourne will boost its best entry for years, with Jana Novotna and Conchita Martinez, the 1994 Wimbledon champion, also appearing. Greg Rusedski, of Great Britain, the defending champion, was unexpectedly beaten by Martin Damm, of the Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-7, 7-5 in the quarter-finals of the Korean Cup in Seoul yesterday.

Regan title bid

Boxing: Robbie Regan, of Wales, has moved up from flyweight to bantamweight to challenge for the World Boxing Organisation title held by Daniel Jimenez, of Puerto Rico, at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, tonight. The powerful Jimenez has already beaten Duke McKenzie, Drew Docherty and Alfred Kotey in British rings.

Beadsworth out

Sailing: Andy Beadsworth, of Great Britain, saw his hopes of a semi-final berth today at the Soling match-racing competition of the French Olympic Classes Regatta at Hyeres, dashed when he lost a tie-breaking race to Jochen Shumann, of Germany.

Johnson's debut

Squash: Paul Johnson, 23, the England No 6, will make his debut for England in the European team championships in Amsterdam next month. Del Harris, the England No 1, is injured.

Simple for seeds

Real tennis: Penny Lurnley, Sue Haswell and Alex Garside, the top seeds, had simple victories in the second round of the British Land national women's championship at Hayling Island.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

In the refresher last week, we looked at the subject of overcalling and saw how it was more important to have good distribution than good high-card strength. This is also reflected in how you should respond when partner overcalls. If you have a good fit, by all means jump around enthusiastically. If, on the other hand, you have good values with no fit, you should proceed with caution.

What would you bid on the following hands after your left-hand opponent opens One Club and partner overcalls One Spade?

- (i) ♠ Q 8 5 4
♥ 9 3
♦ A 9 7 3 2
♣ Q 8

- (ii) ♠ 5 4
♥ K 6 4
♦ K J 5 2
♣ A J 10 5

(i) Three Spades. You have an excellent fit for spades. Even if you go down in Three Spades, you may have stopped your opponents getting together in hearts. Jump support does not show any more than this after an overcall.

(ii) 1 NT. If partner had opened One Spade you would have bid at least 2 NT, but this situation is different. Partner's overcall has removed a fair amount of the opponents' bidding spade and, as we saw last week, his overcall could be on as little as

♠ K Q 10 9 6 ♥ 8 ♦ Q 7 6 3 ♣ 7 6 4

A 1 NT response to an overcall shows about 11-12 points.

What would you bid on the same hands after your left-hand opponent opens One Diamond and partner overcalls One Heart?

(i) Pass. If partner had opened One Heart, you would have responded One Spade, but that is not necessary here. If he has a light overcall, you do not want to go any higher, and you will not miss a game even opposite a maximum overcall.

(ii) Two Diamonds. Two Hearts is out as you would raise him on a great deal less than this. We saw in the answer to (a)(i) that a jump raise would show more than this in terms of distribution and less in high cards. The answer is to show about 10-12 points with the "unassuming cue-bid" to show about 10-12 points with the simple Two Hearts and you can pass. If he has as much as opening-bid values, he will bid more enthusiastically, so you will not miss a good game.

For comprehensive coverage of this subject, try *Step-by-Step Overcalls* by Sally Brock (BT Batsford £8.99).

EU championships: The Great Britain mixed and junior teams are still in medal positions with one day to go. The open team also has a chance of a top-three finish. Standings: Open: 1, Sweden 166; 2, Italy 157; 3, Germany 157; 7, Great Britain 137. Women: 1, Austria 172; 2, Belgium 145; 3, France 143; 8, Great Britain 109. Junior: 1, Denmark 157; 2, Italy 146; 3, Great Britain 140. Mixed: 1, Great Britain 139; 2, France 135.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

ACRIDIAN
a. From Arcadia
b. A flowering creeper
c. A hopper

GLOIRE DE DUON
a. A powerful mustard
b. A fast train
c. A yellow rose

DEGAUSS
a. To protect against mines
b. A mountain scree
c. To eviscerate
CHAMISO
a. A man's chemise
b. A Mexican hat dance
c. A dense shrub

Answers on page 46

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Kramnik victory

Vladimir Kramnik, from Russia, has clinched victory in the \$100,000 Melody Amber tournament in Monaco which combined blindfold games with rapid chess. Kramnik made a steady score in the rapid games but excelled at the blindfold variety.

Final scores were as follows: Kramnik 16; Anand 15; Ivanchuk 14½; Kamsky 12; Karpov, Lautner and Shirov 11½; Piket and Polgar 11; Nikolic 8½; Ljubojevic 5; Xie 4½.

In an extremely strong field, the performances of Anatoly Karpov and Gata Kamsky, the contenders for the Fide (world chess federation) championship, were modest. In this game, from the blindfold section, Kramnik disposed of Kamsky after outplaying him in an endgame.

White: Gata Kamsky
Black: Vladimir Kramnik
Melody Amber, Monaco April 1996

Sicilian Defence
1 e4 c5
2 Nf3 cxd4
3 d4 Nf6
4 Nc4 Nf6
5 Ne3 d6
6 Bg5 e6
7 Qc2 e6
8 O-O h6
9 Bg3 Nc4
10 Bc4 Bc7
11 Oe3 de5
12 e5 Qe6
13 Qe3 Qe6
14 Qe3+ Qe6
15 Bc6 Qe6
16 Ne4 Bc6
17 Nc6+ Ke7

Diagram of final position
a b c d e f g h
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
a b c d e f g h

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to move. This is a variation from the game Alekhine — Stern, Budapest, 1921. The key is the positioning of the queen. A good tactical player would quickly spot the idea 1. Bxg7 Kxg7; 2. Rg4+ attempting to make use of this, but after 2... hxe4 3. Qxe4 gxf3. Black has plenty of material for the queen. Can you spot a preferable way to exploit this?

Solution on page 46

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Bang to rights, or the victim of noises off?

Zzzzt! Could you keep that noise in mind for the next few minutes? According to one who literally had first-hand experience, it is the noise that the Unabomber's pipe-bombs make when they go off. For three people it was the last sound they heard on earth, for 23 others it marked the beginning of months, even years, of pain, suffering and stress. Zzzzt went the bomb and bang went a young pilot's chance of playing the guitar again, let alone realising his ambition of flying to the Moon. He was one of the lucky ones.

At times during last night's grimly fascinating *Witness Unabomber* (Channel 4) it was difficult to concentrate on things that went zzzzt at all times of the day and night. There was so much other "weird stuff" going on, not least of which was the admission of an obscure but quite credible prediction that the Unabomber will become an Amer-

ican folk hero, a focus for those who share his distaste for a society dominated by technology. A few years ago the Unabomber's story would have been an all-American affair. But now, primed as we have been by *The X-Files* and *Twist Peaks*, we know almost as much about this sort of thing as our American cousins. So it came as no surprise when what the story came down to was that there was something nasty in the woods of Montana.

According to the FBI, that something nasty is Theodore Kaczynski — loner, academic dropout and alleged Unabomber. I say alleged of habit. Americans have never been great believers in the law of sub judice and, with the Atlantic Ocean bolstering their confidence, the makers of the programme followed their lead. The FBI had got their man.

And what a man. As Gar Smith, an environmentalist with a well-

rehearsed set of one-liners, put it, the man whose campaign of postal terror had lasted 17 years turned out to be straight from central casting: "The hair was perfect, the make-up was perfect — he was Hollywood made-to-order for the mad scientist, the perfect image of a social maelstrom." You see, you're forgetting already, Zzzzt.

James Head, director, did an excellent job of telling the Unabomber's story to an audience whose knowledge probably begins and ends with that haunting photo of a cowed head, the face hidden by a pair of aviator sunglasses. In fact, as one of the programme's rare lighter moments revealed, Kaczynski's everyday a straw hat and flip-flops for a year, wearing his home town of Lincoln, Arizona. Victims, investigators, criminal psychologists — they all made

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

their contribution, but it was the thoughts of Kirkpatrick Sale that suggested the programme was right in believing that the Unabomber's story may begin with Kaczynski's arrest rather than end. Sale is a neo-Luddite, one of a growing band of Americans never happier than when they are taking a sledgehammer to a computer screen. "We don't approve of his means, they are quite

irrational, quite mad. But his core ends... well, they make a lot of sense." Scary, very scary.

But nothing like as scary as "Bianga" and her long-awaited fashion show in *EastEnders* (BBC1). As the great day dawned, Ricky, perhaps for the first time in his unhappy life, spoke for us all: "I'll be glad when all this is over."

The show was eventually a great success, spurring the Albert Square business community to new heights of optimism. Everybody, it seems, is going into business — Bianga is going into business ("I want 100 per cent the next time"), Gilda and Sanjay are going into extra business, Ian is buying yet another business... even Nick, contemplating breaking the life of a woman and a suitcase full of cash, and by Carol Queen Vic for a flirtation with free

enterprise. The next issue of the Conservative Party's "good news" paper will not lack for material.

Bravely and possibly without precedent, the producers went for two comic storylines in one episode, with the light-fingered Sarah falling into the grubby mists of a lecherous shop manager, as we all believed, but the squeaky-clean hands of a couple of evangelical Christians. "Jesus loves you, Sarah." And just to prove it a little miracle was arranged — fierce father Ted never discovered she had slipped out of the house. To a girl at a difficult age, this was right up there with Dirty Den rising again.

The misery quotient was, as ever, maintained by Pauline (this has been the worst six months of my life) — hum, tough call, who is now off to Jersey with Willie and a suitcase full of cash, and by Carol and Alan, still locked in the row

from nowhere and apparently heading for disaster. Their scenes may have been short of jokes but Lindsey Coulson and Howard Antony took the acting honours.

The one positive thing about a Thursday night that includes *Secrets of the Paranormal* and *Hollywood Pests* is that it includes *Ellington* (ITV) almost looks good in comparison. Always, but not quite. Last night's was disappointing as those that preceded it — flawed by pitiful humour (with the exception of a nice visual gag about mobile phones), vocal characterisation and a determination to occupy the moral high ground, regardless of the cost to credibility. Two unimaginative plots concerned football managers paying "bungs" and athletes taking steroids. "It's cheating, it's wrong," shouted Ellington at regular intervals. It's unbelievable.

• Lynne Truss is on holiday

CHOICE

- 6.00am Business Breakfast** (10656)
7.00am BBC Breakfast News (Ceefax) (41897)
9.00am Breakfast News Extra (Ceefax) (42828)
9.20am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (7692930)
9.45am Killroy (s) (1758423)
10.30am Good Morning (s) (84133)
12.00pm News (Ceefax) and weather (8461133)
12.05pm World Championship Snooker (s) (8249423)
12.35pm Going for Gold Henry Kelly hosts the general knowledge quiz (s) (3390881)
1.00pm News (Ceefax) and weather (44084)
1.30pm Regional News and weather (9404978)
1.40pm Neighbours (Ceefax) (s) (4414142)
2.00pm Moon over Miami (Ceefax) (s) (589626)
2.50pm Today's Gourmet (s) (6684571) 3.15 *Secret Life of Toys* (s) (s) (3398152)
3.30pm Playdays (s) (1280336) 3.50 *Monster Cafe* (s) (s) (8497171) 4.05 *Casper Classics* (s) (s) (543732) 4.10 *Little Man on the Prairie* (s) (s) (2470423) 4.35 *Clarissa Explains It All* (s) (s) (9079133) 5.00 *Newsworld* (Ceefax) (1582084) 5.10 *Blue Peter* (Ceefax) (s) (1788688)
5.35pm Neighbours (Ceefax) (s) (127862)
6.00pm News (Ceefax) and weather (249)
6.30pm Regional news magazines (201)
7.00pm Wipeout Paul Daniels hosts the game show (Ceefax) WALES: 7.00-7.30 *Don't Look Back* (2775)
7.30pm Tomorrow's World Science magazine (Ceefax) (s) (713)
8.00pm Hi-De-Hi After a secret visit to the camp, Joe Mapin decides that Gladys should be put in charge of the yellowbats (s) (Ceefax) (1423)
8.30pm A Question of Sport David Coleman, Bill Beaumont and Ian Botham are joined by James Robinson, Lawrence Dalgle, Richard Durbin and Nasser Hussain (Ceefax) (s) (2030)
9.00pm Party Election Broadcast by the Green Party (Ceefax) (s) (805797)
9.05pm News (Ceefax) and weather (437713)
9.35pm 999 Michael Burk and Juliet Morns present more extraordinary true stories of heroic rescues, including a runaway sledge which catapults a boy into an icy river in the Cairngorms, and a safety crew which has to break its own rules to rescue a man overcome by fumes in an underground petrol tank (Ceefax) (s) (836220)
10.30pm FILM: Blue Ice (1992) with Michael Caine, Sean Young and Ian Holm. A former intelligence officer encounters an American ambassador's wife and is drawn into a plot involving murder, illegal arms and corruption. Directed by Russell Mulcahy (Ceefax) (s) (8344268)
12.10pm FILM: Hiding Out (1988) with Jon Cryer, Keith Coogan and Anandhi Ghai. A stockbroker is about to testify against a dangerous mobster when he discovers there is a contract out on his life. He skips town and heads for refuge in a suburb where he poses as a high school student in order to dodge his pursuers. Directed by Bob Fosse (120282)
1.40pm Weather (522282)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode
 The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder directly with a VideoPlus+ remote. The numbers in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ (+), PlusCode (+) and Video Programme are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

CHOICE

- 6.00am Open University: Biology** (7216973)
6.25pm The Three Estates (7228713) 6.50 *Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita* (8202355)
7.15pm See Hear Breakfast News (4369788)
7.30pm Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (s) (Ceefax) (52862) 8.00 *The Really Wild Show* (Ceefax) (s) (1902084) 8.25 *The Little Polar Bear* (s) (4625628) 8.30 *William's Wish Wellingtons* (s) (s) (1022125)
8.40pm The Record Yesterday in Parliament (s) (8129055)
9.05pm 2.00pm Daytime on Two Educational programmes, including:
12.00pm English File: Death of a Salesman (93256)
12.30pm Working Lunch presented by Adrian Chiles (37607)
2.00pm The Little Polar Bear (s) (7320020) 2.05 *William's Wish Wellingtons* (s) (s) (7320551)
2.10pm Open View A preview of Open University programmes (s) (7329157)
2.15pm World Championship Snooker (s) (3430267)
6.00pm Shooting Stars (s) (Ceefax) (s) (581)
6.30pm The Champions Fantasy espionage series (s) (Ceefax) (185423)
7.20pm Watch Out Wildlife news (s) (880171)
7.30pm The Transatlantic Sessions Including Davy Spillane, Karen Matheson and Iris Dement (Ceefax) (s) (355) N.I.: 7.30 *Two Left Feet*
8.00pm Top Gear Motorsport Tiff Needell samples the joys of GT racing at Silverstone (Ceefax) (s) (9065)
8.30pm Gardeners' World (Ceefax) (s) (8572)
9.00pm World Championship Snooker (s) (9751)
10.00pm Have I Got News for You Comedy quiz hosted by Angus Deayton. Featuring celebrity contestants Ian Hislop, Eddie Izzard and Janet Street-Porter (Ceefax) (s) (43715)
10.30pm Party Election Broadcast by the Green Party (Ceefax) (s) (798171)
10.35pm Newsnight (Ceefax) (230862)
11.20pm Fantasy Football League (s) (878249)
11.50pm Fantasy Football League (885338)
12.20pm This Life (1246060) 1.00 *Weather* (7300060) 1.05 *World Championship Snooker* (8849689) 2.05 *Film: Happy We* (171060)
11.50pm This Life (s) (Ceefax) (s) (32775)
12.35pm World Championship Snooker (s) (487739)
1.35pm FILM: Happy We (1983) with Brasse Brasseur and a university friend. The film is 50 years on and compares notes about their lives. Directed by Lasse Hallstrom (Swedish with English subtitles) (880350) Ends at 3.30



Gardener Gay Search (8.30pm)

CHOICE

- English File: Death of a Salesman** BBC2, midday
 Family re-enactments intensify as Arthur Miller's Brooklyn antihero played with pathetic dignity by Warren Mitchell, edges nearer to the abyss. Part two of David Thacker's appropriately claustrophobic production contains the memorable speech from Willy Loman's staid wife (Rosemary Harris) in which she sets out the extent of the play. Willy is not rich or famous, nor the finest character who ever lived, but a small man's tragedy can be just as terrible as a great one's. A noted stage director, not least of Miller's works, Thacker here exploits the fluidity of the television camera and its ability, through the close-up, to home in on emotion. Willy and his sons may talk boldly of plans for the future but they are hopelessly trapped and the production underlines this by setting them against a dark background.
Tomorrow's World BBC1, 7.30pm
 Not always noted for the gravity of its items, *Tomorrow's World* makes amends with a high-tech, it is about keeping air travel safe. When the number of passengers is calculated to double to six million a day in the next 20 years, air traffic controllers currently rely on radar to identify the position of aircraft. The snag is that much of the world has no radar cover. The programme checks out an alternative system which tracks aircraft movements with GPS. It promises to cut hours of journey times and to allow a doubling of flights on the already busy north Atlantic route. After this, a new weapon against jewel thieves may seem a small thing. But a laser which can produce a "fingerprint" for an individual diamond is nothing if not ingenious. It is based on the fact that every diamond scatters light in a different way.
Gardeners' World BBC2, 8.30pm
 An otherwise unremarkable Hertfordshire garden gains added interest through its late owner, Ronald Dahl, writer of enduring tales for children, did not claim to be green-fingered but the horticultural enthusiasm of his wife, rubbed off. Dahl's story *James and the Giant Peach Tree* was inspired by a peach tree in his garden and if he penned no comparable adventure about the onion, it was a vegetable in which he took special pride. He also enjoyed his arbour of lime trees and pruned them himself. His widow gives Gay Search a guided tour. On the practical side, the avuncular Geoff Hamilton celebrates what we hope is the onset of spring with a consumer guide to lawnmowers. With more than an acre of grass to cut, he speaks with authority.
Father Ted Channel 4, 9.30pm
 As the Graham Linehan-Arthur Matthews comedy skilfully approaches the end of its second series its success continues to evoke surprise. It is as if an unlikely tale of three variously hopeless Irish priests and their imperious housekeeper is not the stuff of which good comedy can possibly be made. But good comedy does not need a cutting edge even when the subject is as topical and *Father Ted*, in its easy-going and incongruous way, is indisputably that. The key is the sheer pace of the show, its moves orchestrated with as much precision as in a French farce. To this add the deceptively skilled performances, led by Dermot Morgan as the naive but resourceful Father Ardal O'Hanlon as his duty curate. A bit late, tonight's plot compels the clerics to offer sacrifices for Lent. You start laughing almost before the titles roll.
Peter Waymark

CHOICE

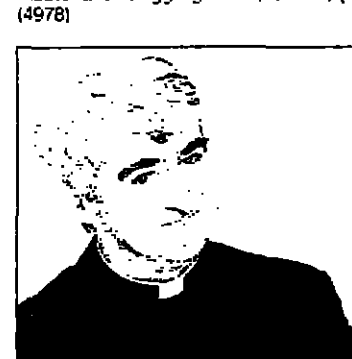
- 6.00pm GMTV** (5807854)
9.25pm Live, Lose or Draw (s) (7823249)
9.55pm Regional News (Teletext) (6447635)
10.00pm The Time... the Place (s) (2432551)
10.35pm This Morning presented by Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan (4464388)
12.20pm Regional News (Teletext) (6467371)
12.30pm News and weather (Teletext) (3393978)
12.55pm Murder, She Wrote (s) (7345775) 2.00 *Home and Away* (Teletext) (s) (5423040) 2.25 *Chain Letters* (Teletext) (s) (5425939) 2.50 *Vanessa* (Teletext) (s) (4588713)
3.20pm News headlines (Teletext) (7350268)
3.25pm Regional News (Teletext) (7359539)
3.30pm Rosie and Jim (s) (8479775) 3.45 *Zzzzt!* (s) (8467930) 4.00 *Talespin* (s) (s) (2577355) 4.25 *The Geeks* (Teletext) (s) (2570442) 4.55 *Hang On* (s) (4523236)
5.10pm A Country Practice (s) (9670210)
5.40pm News and weather (Teletext) (676713)
6.00pm Home and Away (s) (Teletext) (s) (123607)
6.25pm HTV News (Teletext) (226268)
6.45pm Sportsweek (Teletext) (182510)
7.00pm Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right Couples test their knowledge of public opinion (Teletext) (s) (7341)
7.30pm Coronation Street (Teletext) (881)
8.00pm The Bill: Value Added Hollis goes undercover in pursuit of the unsavoury owner of a club port (Teletext) (5581)
8.30pm The Upper Hand Caroline discovers a different Charlie (s) (5626)
9.00pm Soldier, Soldier The officers rebuild a company's morale after the death of Vinny Bowles (s) (Teletext) (s) (4607)
10.00pm News and weather (Teletext) (75951)
10.30pm Party Election Broadcast by the Green Party (790997)
10.35pm HTV News and weather (415794)
10.45pm Entertaining Mr. Wedlock Behind the scenes of the entertainment business (377794)
11.15pm FILM: Longarm (1988) with John T. Kenney and Whitney Kershaw. Comedy about a tough US marshal's attempts to end the lawlessness of the post-Civil War New Mexico territory. Directed by Virgil Vogel (428022)
12.35pm Hotel Babylon (s) (7555737)
1.15pm The Good Sex Guide... Late (s) (782447)
2.15pm FILM: A Man and a Woman (1966) with Anouk Aimée, Jean-Louis Trintignant and Pierre Barouh. Oscar-winning French romantic drama. Directed by Claude Lelouch (104598)
4.05pm Not Fade Away (s) (5815027)
5.00pm On the Live Side (92282)
5.30pm Morning News (87263)

CHOICE

- As HTV West except:**
2.50pm-3.20pm Wish You Were Here... (45287)
6.25-7.00pm Wales Tonight (381510)
6.45pm Friday Live (44626)
11.45pm Hunter (26164)
WESTCOUNTRY
As HTV West except:
12.25-12.30pm My Story (6475336)
12.55pm Coronation Street (3301997)
1.25-1.55pm Chain Letters (79727133)
1.55pm Home and Away (5382468)
2.25pm High Road (5423358)
2.55-3.20pm Gardeners' Diary (1919828)
3.10pm Home and Away (5670210)
6.00-7.00pm Westcountry Live (32152)
1.35pm Westcountry News (406016)
10.50pm Film: Stand Up Virgin Soldiers (28721355)
CENTRAL
As HTV West except:
12.55pm Home and Away (3501997)
1.25pm Chain Letters (79727133)
1.55pm A Country Practice (44122317)
1.50pm Shortland Street (9670210)
6.25-7.00pm Central News and Weather (381510)
10.45pm Magnum (15255084)
12.40pm Hotel Babylon (7245350)
1.20pm The Good Sex Guide... Late (8823379)
2.10pm The Chart Show (7322602)
3.15pm Dear Nick (7726242)
4.10pm Jobfinder (8134089)
5.20pm Asian Eye (1720466)
MERIDIAN
As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25pm Chain Letters (3301997)
1.25pm Home and Away (79727133)
1.55pm A Country Practice (44122317)
5.10pm Home and Away (9670210)
5.30pm Three Minutes - Your Story (882828)
5.40pm ITN Early Evening News: Weekend Weather (676713)
6.00-7.00pm Meridian Tonight (32152)
10.00-10.30pm News at Ten: Weather (37591)
10.35pm Meridian News and Weather (492133)
11.35pm Only a Game! (470881)
12.05pm Tales from the Crypt (1232114)
5.00pm Friescreen (92282)
S4C
Starts: 6.35pm The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (8278230) 7.00 *The Big Breakfast* (34007) 9.00 *The Golden Girls* (14268) 9.30 *Film: Back Room Boy* (17354) 11.00 *Cutting Edge* (33978) 12.00 *Sesame Street* (34510) 1.00pm *Slot Meltin'* (37794) 1.30 *Blue Wilderness* (8885739) 1.55 *Jimmy's* (8822930) 2.25 *Channel 4 Racing From Sandown* (6408045) 4.30 *An Inspector Calls* (734) 5.00 *Pump: Nod Nod Oodini* (5249) 5.30 *Fifteen to One* (666) 6.00 *Newydd* (589249) 6.15 *Heno* (153666) 7.00 *Pobol Y Cwm* (401317) 7.25 *Jiwt Jiw!* (689220) 8.00 *Junior Cup* (4133) 8.30 *Newydd* (3268) 9.00 *Swansea: Pen-y-bont* (4973) 9.30 *Wild Britain* (42536) 10.00 *Brookside* (85133) 10.30 *Rory Bremner - Who Else?* (202607) 11.10 *Eurotrash* (87136) 11.40 *Flava* (371171) 12.15am *T.F.I. Friday* (5357195) 1.20 *Film: The Bachelor Party* (523553)

CHOICE

- 6.35pm The Wonderful Wizard of Oz** (s) (8278230)
7.00pm The Big Breakfast (34007)
9.00pm The Golden Girls (s) (Teletext) (s) (14268)
9.30pm FILM: Back Room Boy (1942, b/w) with Arthur Askey as a burning BBC employee who is sent to a remote light-house where he encounters Nazi spies. Directed by Herbert Mason (17354)
11.00pm Comrades (s) (Teletext) (33978)
12.00pm Fruity Stories (s) (Teletext) (s) (84304)
12.30pm Sesame Street (s) (68030) 1.30 *Alfred J. Kwak* (s) (168957539) 1.55 *Jimmy's* (s) (Teletext) (s) (8822930)
2.25pm Channel 4 Racing from Sandown Park Live coverage of the 2.35, 3.05, 3.40 and 4.10 races (s) (6409046)
4.30pm Fifteen to One (Teletext) (s) (794) 5.00 *Rescue* (s) (Teletext) (s) (5249) 5.30 *An Inspector Calls* (s) (Teletext) (s) (666)
6.00pm T.F.I. Friday Last in the series presented live by Chris Evans. Guests include the actor Richard E. Grant and Zig and Zag Music is provided by the Cig and Sleeper (s) (30794)
7.00pm Channel 4 News (Teletext) (416065)
7.55pm Book Choice John Carey reviews A.S. Byatt's *Babel Tower* (Teletext) (s) (79626)
8.00pm Fruity Stories The last in the series takes a look at the changing world of Britain and what can be done to save our native species (Teletext) (s) (4133)
8.30pm Brookside (Teletext) (s) (3268)
9.00pm Cybill American sitcom with Cybill Shepherd as a twice-divorced grandmother and struggling actor (Teletext) (s) (4978)
9.30pm [CHOICE] Father Ted: Cigarettes and Alcohol (Teletext) (s) (42539)
10.00pm Roseanne Dan leaves the garage with an extended holiday planned and a pension cheque in his pocket that he wants to invest. Roseanne sees Disney World beckoning (Teletext) (s) (95133)
10.30pm Rory Bremner - Who Else? More topical satirical impressions (s) (202607)
11.00pm Eurotrash Antoine de Caunes and Jean Paul Gaultier with another collection of items in doubtful taste (s) (87136)
11.40pm Flava The third in the eight-part celebration of black music styles (s) (871171)
12.15am T.F.I. Friday As 6.00pm (s) (5357195)
1.20pm FILM: The Bachelor Party (1957, b/w) with Don Murray, Patricia Smith, Jack Warden and Larry Blyden. As the drink begins to flow at a stag night, doubt and anxieties develop. Directed by Deibert Mann (Teletext) (523553). Ends at 3.00



Dermot Morgan as Fr Ted (9.30pm)

SATELLITE AND CABLE

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Vision supplement, published Saturday

SKY TV

- 7.00am** 1.00 *Press Your Luck* (101) 1.30 *Love Connection* (101) 2.00 *Love Connection* (101) 2.30 *Love Connection* (101) 3.00 *Love Connection* (101) 3.30 *Love Connection* (101) 4.00 *Love Connection* (101) 4.30 *Love Connection* (101) 5.00 *Love Connection* (101) 5.30 *Love Connection* (101) 6.00 *Love Connection* (101) 6.30 *Love Connection* (101) 7.00 *Love Connection* (101) 7.30 *Love Connection* (101) 8.00 *Love Connection* (101) 8.30 *Love Connection* (101) 9.00 *Love Connection* (101) 9.30 *Love Connection* (101) 10.00 *Love Connection* (101) 10.30 *Love Connection* (101) 11.00 *Love Connection* (101) 11.30 *Love Connection* (101) 12.00 *Love Connection* (101) 12.30 *Love Connection* (101) 1.00 *Love Connection* (101) 1.30 *Love Connection* (101) 1.50 *Love Connection* (101) 2.00 *Love Connection* (101) 2.30 *Love Connection* (101) 2.50 *Love Connection* (101) 3.00 *Love Connection* (101) 3.30 *Love Connection* (101) 3.50 *Love Connection* (101) 4.00 *Love Connection* (101) 4.30 *Love Connection* (101) 4.50 *Love Connection* (101) 5.00 *Love Connection* (101) 5.30 *Love Connection* (101) 5.50 *Love Connection* (101) 6.00 *Love Connection* (101) 6.30 *Love Connection* (101) 6.50 *Love Connection* (101) 7.00 *Love Connection* (101) 7.30 *Love Connection* (101) 7.50 *Love Connection* (101) 8.00 *Love Connection* (101) 8.30 *Love Connection* (101) 8.50 *Love Connection* (101) 9.00 *Love Connection* (101) 9.30 *Love Connection* (101) 9.50 *Love Connection* (101) 10.00 *Love Connection* (101) 10.30 *Love Connection* (101) 10.50 *Love Connection* (101) 11.00 *Love Connection* (101) 11.30 *Love Connection* (101) 11.50 *Love Connection* (101) 12.00 *Love Connection* (101) 12.30 *Love Connection* (101) 12.50 *Love Connection* (101) 1.00 *Love Connection* (101) 1.30 *Love Connection* (101) 1.50 *Love Connection* (101) 2.00 *Love Connection* (101) 2.30 *Love Connection* (101) 2.50 *Love Connection* (101) 3.00 *Love Connection* (101) 3.30 *Love Connection* (101) 3.50 *Love Connection* (101) 4.00 *Love Connection* (101) 4.30 *Love Connection* (101) 4.50 *Love Connection* (101) 5.00 *Love Connection* (101) 5.30 *Love Connection* (101) 5.50 *Love Connection* (101) 6.00 *Love Connection* (101) 6.30 *Love Connection* (101) 6.50 *Love Connection* (101) 7.00 *Love Connection* (101) 7.30 *Love Connection* (101) 7.50 *Love Connection* (101) 8.00 *Love Connection* (101) 8.30 *Love Connection* (101) 8.50 *Love Connection* (101) 9.00 *Love Connection* (101) 9.30 *Love Connection* (101) 9.50 *Love Connection* (101) 10.00 *Love Connection* (101) 10.30 *Love Connection* (101) 10.50 *Love Connection* (101) 11.00 *Love Connection* (101) 11.30 *Love Connection* (101) 11.50 *Love Connection* (101) 12.00 *Love Connection* (101) 12.30 *Love Connection* (101) 12.50 *Love Connection* (101) 1.00 *Love Connection* (101) 1.30 *Love Connection* (101) 1.50 *Love Connection* (101) 2.00 *Love Connection* (101) 2.30 *Love Connection* (101) 2.50 *Love Connection* (101) 3.00 *Love Connection* (101) 3.30 *Love Connection* (101) 3.50 *Love Connection* (101) 4.00 *Love Connection* (101) 4.30 *Love Connection* (101) 4.50 *Love Connection* (101) 5.00 *Love Connection* (101) 5.30 *Love Connection* (101) 5.50 *Love Connection* (101) 6.00 *Love Connection* (101) 6.30 *Love Connection* (101) 6.50 *Love Connection* (101) 7.00 *Love Connection</*

Ince embodies new approach

Venables puts faith in his flexible friends

By ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THE meter is running and England have six weeks to turn the missed opportunities of Wednesday night into goals come the kick-off of the European championship at Wembley on June 8. "We haven't got long," Terry Venables, the coach, reflected after the game against Croatia on Wednesday. England's third goalless draw in six matches, but I'm not unhappy where we've got to... creating at this level is the difficulty. We had five clear chances against Croatia, and we will score, I'm convinced of that."

His conviction has to be strong. He has withstood almost two years of scepticism over his attempts, now coming into bud, to turn Englishmen into continental footballers. When, however, he says: "We just have to finish things off, it will be all right," it still demands a spectacular leap of faith.

For, on Wednesday night, there were five teams representing Great Britain and Ireland: none won, only Northern Ireland scored a goal, and still we keep telling ourselves that England's league is the best, and our goalkeepers are dynamite.

Robbie Fowler awoke yesterday to a strange contrast in headlines. On one page, he could read that he is allegedly the subject of a £10 million bid from Johan Cruyff at Barcelona, this to go with the also reported £7 million new boot deal to be laid at his feet in the summer. On the other page, the same scribes were damning him for his brace of missed chances against Croatia.

Yet it was behind the profligate Fowler that England's real engagement became fascinating. We really did see that Venables's vision of asking players to step outside the blinkered mould of English play could work. Asking defenders to step into midfield, or forwards and midfield play-

ers to step back into defence, has been rather like inviting sighted men to read Braille. It can be done, but takes time and effort.

Venables has devoted that time and, on Wednesday, we saw how, little by little, things are transforming. Two players in particular, Paul Ince and Steve McManaman, performed duties alien to their instincts. Not only did McManaman forsake the freedom of Liverpool to stay wide on the left, but he also did as functional a job as Stone on the other flank of "tracking" back like born defenders to harass opponents. This they had to do with a three-man defence behind them.

Even more imposing has been the form of Ince in the two matches since his recall. Dropped after irrepressibly charging forward more than a

the flanks, still palpably bothers foreign teams. The race against time is there in the England camp, and also outside it where Venables has named May 8 as the deadline for the likes of Tony Adams, Steve Howey and Gareth Southgate to prove their fitness for the European championship.

England have three games to fine-tune their approach, the Wembley date with Hungary on May 15, and then the sojourn to China and Hong Kong, returning with barely time to reacclimatise for the championship itself.

The coach believes that England's course is properly set. Some committed Croatians wonder if their curve is beginning to dip; as the bitterness of the Balkan War recedes, perhaps the drive and fervour of their team drops with it, but there may be an organisational reason for the chances that they offered England on Wednesday.

Until Croatia qualified, they had two coaches, Tomislav Ivic, the director of coaching, and Miroslav Blazevic, the team coach. The first believed in order, the second in liberty. They quarrelled, Ivic publicly stating: "We have great players, but we do not have a great team. They need to work more, practise more." Ivic was dismissed and, on Wednesday, Blazevic indulged three of his players, notably Zvonimir Boban, the half-fit captain, who wanted to play at Wembley.

England's indulgence, of another kind, entails the trip to the Orient. Venables goes on a reconnaissance mission to Peking next week to inspect the playing surface at the Worker Stadium where, last summer, David Seaman, playing for Arsenal, broke an ankle in a pot hole. There is a clause in the contract that says that England will not visit if the pitch is not safe, and Venables insists that he will exercise it if there is the slightest doubt.

Hurst's ball 1
Leading article 21
David Miller 45
Shaky Scotland 45

year ago, Ince has performed deeper and deeper, becoming, at times, not only the anchor but also an auxiliary centre back, when the occasion demands it.

"People talk about this 'Guv'nor' thing," Venables said. "If ever a position in a team needs a special player, it's the one I want from Paul now — and he can do it. If the opposition play two up, we need only three at the back; if they push three up, he's got to play centre half. Whatever he wants to do, he can do. He's been a little bit of a worrier, upright about the demands, but you could see that in all of them 18 months ago."

In Ince's conversion, we get the personification of England's attempt to marry a tactical awareness to the budding power, the physical directness that, coming from



Brown gets in some last minute training before her appearance in the UK Living women's FA Cup final on Sunday. Photographs: Chris Harris

Record-breaker Brown finds secret of catching them young

Sarah Forde meets the teenager who is hoping to pass her biggest test with flying colours

RACHEL BROWN'S appearance in the UK Living women's FA Cup final on Sunday is just the start of a momentous few weeks for her — nine days later, the Liverpool goalkeeper takes the first of her GCSE examinations. Instead of mugging up on history, Brown will be making it by playing in the final against Croydon at the New Den at the age of 15.

Paul Allen became the youngest modern-day FA Cup finalist with his appearance for West Ham United in the 1980 final, but next to Brown he was almost a seasoned veteran. She is a year and 311 days younger than Allen was when he faced Arsenal and was denied a fairy-tale goal by an infamous crude tackle by Willie Young.

Allen went on to play for Tottenham Hotspur and Southampton and, this weekend, will be celebrating after helping Swindon Town to win the Eddleigh League second division championship. If Liverpool overcome Croydon, Brown's celebrations will be muted by the thought of those exam dates just around the corner.

An invitation to join the women's England squad at Bisham Abbey

preparing for the European championship qualifying game against Portugal has had to be declined. She must return to St Christopher's High School in Accrington to sit the first of ten GCSEs.

The final appearance represents the end of a remarkable year of progress for Brown. Last season, she played for Accrington Stanley in the backwater of the third division of the North West regional league. "Anyone who wanted to play football could play for our team, even if they could hardly kick a ball," she said. "So I got a lot of goalkeeping practice."

Visits to goalkeeping schools run by Bob Wilson, the former Arsenal and Scotland goalkeeper, were the key to her rise. She has been the only girl attending courses for the past three years and Mick Payne, a coach at the school, advised her that a move to a

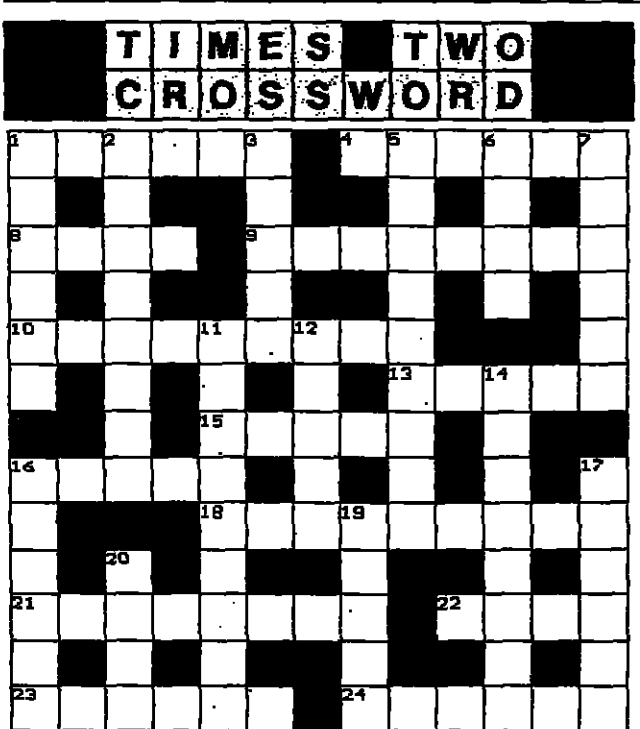
premier national division club would allow her talent to blossom.

Liverpool were the lucky beneficiaries of that advice and the retirement of Tracey Davidson, their regular goalkeeper, offered Brown an early first team opportunity. A six goal drubbing at the hands of Arsenal in her first game did not daunt her and she exacted full revenge with an assured performance against the same opposition in the cup semi-final.

Her progress has led to three training sessions with the England squad and a kit sponsorship deal with All Sports, which will be signed alongside Tim Flowers, another of the company's signings, at Ewood Park today. Graham Keeley, the England women's goalkeeping coach, describes Brown as one for the future.

"Her basic handling skills are very good, she catches everything," Brown said. "If anything, she's a bit quiet, but with more experience and confidence, she'll be happily barking instructions to the older players."

The match on Sunday will, though, offer her sternest test yet. "I'll be nervous," she said. "I get nervous for every match, but, on Sunday, I'll have butterflies everywhere."



No 766

ACROSS

- 1 Playing well (2,4); tell (6)
- 4 With sharp, uneven edge (6)
- 8 Layer; one fastening (4)
- 9 Integral/differential technique (8)
- 10 Not competent (9)
- 13 Brief moment (5)
- 15 Relieve; calm (suspicious) (5)
- 16 An Earl; a Firth; an eel (5)
- 18 Apiarist (3-6)
- 21 Passed through strainer (8)
- 22 Ill-disciplined child (4)
- 23 Quality of tone colour (6)
- 24 Poor-quality (material) (6)

DOWN

- 1 Realise instinctively (6)

- 2 Arrow-maker; Beaumont collaborator (8)
- 3 Holy city of Arabia (5)
- 5 Pattern; original, perfect specimen (9)
- 6 Seabird; deceive (4)
- 7 Have longing for (6)
- 11 Handle spontaneously; (mis-) repeat as heard (4,2,3)
- 12 Swelling; 1944 Battle (5)
- 14 Divinely guided; very clever (guess) (8)
- 16 One in unsuitable place (6)
- 17 Attractive; rather (6)
- 19 Acclaim, cachet (5)
- 20 Fruit; sounds like vertical line (4)

The solution to 765 will be published Wednesday, May 1

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Openers hold key to tactical challenge

By SIMON WILDE

MARCH 17, 1996, could prove a significant date in cricket history. On that day, Sri Lanka won the World Cup and, by dint of the brilliant and original way that they took advantage of the fielding restrictions at the start of their innings throughout the tournament, caused a complete revision of strategy for the limited-overs game.

That is why county cricketers and coaches have spent the intervening six weeks burning the midnight oil in preparation for the start, today, of the Benson and Hedges Cup, which, for the first time, will be played under the rules in force during the World Cup.

The effects are already apparent. Pre-season practice matches that, in the past, were conducted gingerly, have been played at a frenetic pace as teams have searched for their nearest equivalents to Sanath Jayasuriya and Romesh Kaluwitharana.

Those who think little of the talent within the county game should have been at Hove last week, when Sussex and Surrey met in two Benson and Hedges Cup mock-ups. In one match, Sussex scored 405 and conceded 350; in the other, Surrey totalled 390, Sussex replying with 240. One boundary was, admittedly, short, but nevertheless, this was scoring on a new scale.

In each of the four innings, the batting side was well past 100 by the end of the fifteenth over, when the restriction limiting to two the number of fielders permitted outside the "ring" ends. At the same stage in the past, they would have settled for 50 for one.

Sussex's opening pair were Martin Speight and Bill Athey. Speight is a well-known dasher and relished the challenge. More interestingly, so did Athey, who is a renowned blocker and has been criticised in the past for not playing freely.

In Surrey's victory, Alistair Brown launched them with a spectacular century, his third in four pre-season outings. Last season, he was dropped for batting too flamboyantly; there is little chance of that happening this year. He, along with countless others — such as Nick Knight and Neil

good trying to hit out from the start if the ball is going sideways."

One of the reasons that England fared so badly at the World Cup was that, though they shuffled opening partners, they never got away to a fast enough start.

The real challenge of the restriction on fielders is not to the batsmen, but to the bowlers. Should a fielding side aim at containment or taking wickets? Gilbert favours containment. "I think you will see bowlers being a lot more defensive, bowling in a way you would normally associate with the last ten overs of the innings," he said. "They will be firing it in at the block-hole."

Daryl Foster, the coach at Kent, the runners-up in the Benson and Hedges Cup last year, would prefer his bowlers to attack. "We have had lots of talks about strategy," he said. "Should we open with a spinner, for instance. The first 15 overs is a great opportunity to take two or three wickets, but to do that you must retain a slip and a gully throughout. That's the way I think we will be approaching it."

The teams that do well will be the ones that adapt most readily to the new format. "It is going to require a change of thinking among the batsman and the bowlers," Andy Stoddard, the Gloucestershire coach, said. "It will be no good playing the game the traditional Benson and Hedges Cup way."

Woe betide any spectator who arrives an hour late. He or she may miss the best entertainment of the day.



Alan Lee's county prospects for the new season 44

Smith, of Warwickshire, who took full advantage of the new regulations during a fixture with British Universities on Wednesday — have been given licences to thrill.

"We are going to see some pretty extraordinary cricket," David Gilbert, the Surrey coach, said. "I'm thrilled at the way the game is going."

One-day cricket had become dreadfully predictable, but the Sri Lankans have come in and shown everyone that anything is possible. For the strategy to work, the pitch must be a good one. It is no

BSkyB in move to fund new tournament

By DAVID HANDS AND MARK SOUSTER

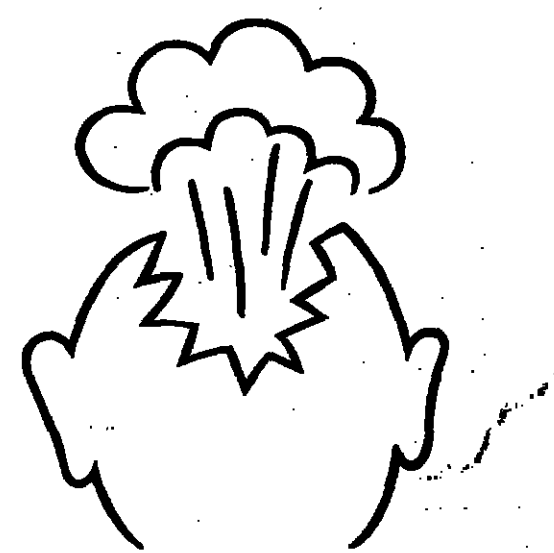
IF THE home rugby unions required further evidence of the financial support available to their restless clubs, they received it after a meeting on Wednesday night between Scotland's leading clubs and their counterparts from England and Wales.

Meirhoe, Stirling County and either Boroughmuir or Watsonians would benefit by £2,865,000 over five years as part of the deal proposed by BSkyB, the satellite television company 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of The Times. The same funding would be available to the 20 teams from the five nations taking part in the premier competition of a two-tier European tournament that the clubs seek to run themselves.

Keith Robertson, the chief executive of Scottish First Division Rugby Ltd, stressed that the clubs seek to stay part of the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU), with whom he hopes to meet soon. "This whole thing stems from England," Fred McLeod, the SRU's senior vice-president, said yesterday. "I hope our clubs are not being led down a road which they will regret."

Meanwhile, Wasps are expected to announce today two significant signings, both English, and the flotation of the club as a public limited company. They have been linked with Simon Shaw, the England A lock from Bristol, while Bristol themselves are in discussion with Paul Burke, the Ireland stand-off half.

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